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Bachelor of Science (Sociology)

CONCEPTIONS OF DEPRIVATION: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

A thesis offered for the degree of

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# A B S T R A C T

This is a study of the concept of 'deprivation'. It is aimed to discover what the concept means to teachers and others responsible for the education and welfare of children living in a housing estate which is officially recognized as 'deprived'. A social construction approach is used as the idea is examined at what is in essence 'folk' level\* as far as the contributing professionals are concerned. The recorded impressions held by these professional people provide the data for the investigation and eight teachers working at the local primary school serve as key witnesses.

Before examining the largely tape-recorded evidence collected in the field-work phase of the project attention is given to the way in which the word 'deprivation' is used and an attempt is made to identify underlying ideas held by users of the concept: it is suspected that the label 'deprived child' may be a factor when underachievement occurs in schools serving neighbourhoods of the kind here considered.

The difficulty of usefully surveying the wide literature on deprivation is discussed and attention is drawn to the sterility of studies in this field which attempt to negate the influence of ideology: it is postulated that a full understanding of the concept of deprivation is unlikely to be gained solely from measurement of the generally-used criteria. Nevertheless, indices of deprivation as revealed, for example, in the Census are noticed and comparisons are made between the

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\* "The folk wisdom of a people is the essence of their 'common sense' and it is important to them because of the contribution it makes to the maintenance of their particular social order."

Martindale, D The Nature and Types of Sociological Theory, RKP, 1961, p. 4.

research area and the country as a whole. Even so, as it is the subjective reality of witnesses that is being sought this research project is in the tradition of sociological phenomenology.

Five groups of hypotheses have been set up against which to measure possible ways in which children come to be categorized as 'deprived' and in a further group of hypotheses an attempt is made to measure the implications of such categorization before formulating operational advice of particular significance to teachers serving in neighbourhoods seen as deprived.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

At the completion of this thesis my thanks are due to a number of people: without their help the work would not have been possible.

My wife, Kathleen, has shown incredible patience and understanding as I have gathered together material and expounded upon what sometimes must have seemed the most abstract of concepts, and my son, Michael, has kept up an interest in the project and offered encouragement when it was most needed. From his comparatively secure conceptual base as a geographer and planner he has been able to offer critical comment of a most helpful kind.

Thanks are due to Geoffrey Esland for sowing the seed from which grew this enterprise, and to Professor Ray Pahl for pointing the direction and helping me to get started along the way.

My original Open University Internal Supervisor, Professor Don Swift, was particularly patient with my early attempts to formulate a plan, and he showed interest and gave encouragement as the project got under way. He moved to Hong Kong, however, in September 1981, and Ray Woolfe was appointed in his place the following June, offering further encouragement.

My Open University External Supervisor, Bill Tyler, is to be thanked for his superb tutoring, particularly during the field-work phase. His advice has been most realistic throughout my higher degree studentship.

Grateful thanks must go to all those professional people, who have to remain anonymous, that have willingly given time and intellectual effort to provide the data upon which this project is based. The Acting Head, the Head, the Deputy Head and the teachers of Meadowland Primary School

have provided key material and shown greater hospitality than an educational researcher has a right to expect. Other teachers in the district have also co-operated. County Council officials were very helpful in the preliminary stages and then City officials took over the task of filling in the necessary detail. Those approached at the Education Office gave help of the most practical kind and the Educational Psychologist and the Senior Education Welfare Officer were vital links as the project developed. Apart from his considerable help in setting the scene, a County Social Worker was instrumental in causing useful interviews with representatives of a number of voluntary agencies. The Deputy Manager of the City D.H.S.S. Office was similarly helpful. City Housing officials gave valuable testimonies and an Assistant Planner proved a staunch ally, her local knowledge helping to move things along at a crucial stage early in the project.

Finally, thanks are due to Mrs. Simpson for typing the thesis and putting my much-revised efforts into an orderly form.

## P R E F A C E

The idea of a study looking into conceptions of deprivation arose out of a telephone conversation which the author had with Geoffrey Esland of the Open University in 1974. The latter had been his tutor during part-time study at the London University Institute of Education in the early 1970s and at this time a 22,000-word survey of the literature on compensatory education was produced: as he collected material for this work the author became increasingly concerned over the apparently uncritical way in which terms like 'cultural deprivation', 'social deprivation' and 'linguistic deprivation' were used by a number of writers in the field of compensatory education.

During visits to the University of Kent in 1973 discussion with Professor Ray Pahl persuaded the author that some of the problems which had arisen in the literature survey might be better understood if an analytical article were written based upon the material collected. Making full use of the deficit/difference model such an article was produced.\* The complexities associated with different forms of deprivation were undoubtedly simplified in the process of generalization - probably over-simplified, but perhaps this was inevitable when so much material of this kind was being compressed for the purposes of a comparatively short article (the original draft in fact had to be cut in half before acceptance by Sage Publications).

In the telephone conversation mentioned above Geoffrey Esland

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\* 'Compensatory education: possible stances and teachers' attitudes' published in Urban Education, Vol IX, No 4, January, 1975. Sage Publications.

convinced the writer that the best way to get to grips with the concept of deprivation would be to carry out an enquiry in the tradition of the sociology of knowledge aiming to discover the conceptions of deprivation held by people seen as particularly significant in terms of 'deprived' children, such as those who have featured in compensatory education schemes.

Quite how such a research project would be put into operation was not clear at this stage and it will be seen in Chapter 2 (Note 4) that the first draft plan proved to be quite unrealistic. Gradually however, after advice from the researcher's external supervisor, Bill Tyler of the University of Kent, the plan to focus upon one council estate seen by officials as 'deprived'\* came into being and the stages whereby teachers and other professionals became the subjects of enquiry are described in Chapter 2.

In Chapter 1 the word 'deprivation' is considered in some detail as are the ideas seen to underlie the term. It is wondered whether 'deprivation' is a label which, once attached, brings about lowered

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\* Throughout this thesis the term 'deprived' is held to be problematic and 'deprived child' or 'deprived neighbourhood', for example, is either enclosed by inverted commas or the child or the neighbourhood is expressed as being 'seen as' deprived.

It is appreciated that the above reference to 'one council estate seen by officials as "deprived"' may be thought to have some kind of technical validity in that officials have presumably adopted this view of the housing estate in terms of indices generally used in their professional work. The reference may of course be read in this way but it was not the writer's intention and elsewhere the term 'seen as deprived' will not necessarily be supportable by any kind of objective criteria. (In Chapter 3, however, attention is paid to indices of deprivation as revealed, for example, in Census returns.)

'Seen as' is typically used as an expression of subjective judgment; for example, children being seen by teachers as poorly-clad, anti-social, having low aspirations and other characteristics listed under 'A' at the end of Chapter 1. These individual judgments provide the basis for this study and care has been taken to record accurately witnesses' subjective impressions of deprivation.



teacher-expectation and low achievement on the part of the children labelled 'deprived'. While the literature is being consulted the urgent search for an objective measurement of deprivation is considered, as is the possibility of a cycle of deprivation, before theoretical models of deprivation are critically examined and help is sought for the project from the ideas contained in them. It is proposed that many problems issue out of the use of the term 'deprivation' and hypotheses are set up against which to measure the way in which children come to be so categorized and the possible implications of such categorization.

Besides providing a chronology of the activities which have translated research plans into reality, Chapter 2 takes up practical and theoretical considerations attaching to the methods and approach used.

In Chapter 3 the generally-used indices of deprivation are examined in the context of the study neighbourhood before, in Chapter 4, the field work is analysed in terms of the first group of five hypothetical statements evolved in Chapter 1.

In Chapter 5 there is further discussion of the research findings in an attempt to sum up what may be reasonably concluded from the evidence given by subjects. The area of analysis is enlarged so as to include the second group of hypotheses presented at the end of Chapter 1 but although discussion continues to stem from ideas generated in field work the consideration of these latter hypotheses helps lead to the formulation of operational advice, issues relating to a wider canvas having been exposed in the school/neighbourhood-based investigation.

CHAPTER 1

THE PROBLEM AND ITS CONTEXT

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## CHAPTER 1

### THE PROBLEM AND ITS CONTEXT

#### 1. Deprivation - the word

Deprivation has been seen as 'one of the most overworked words in the English language'.<sup>1</sup> Rutter and Madge find a wide range of emphases as the word is used in the numerous texts they survey in the work here quoted and, in any study of the literature on deprivation, the evaluative nature of the word soon becomes apparent.

In its simple form the term implies 'lack', 'loss' or perhaps 'dispossession' but it is seldom used in a simple or a neutral way. A young school-leaver may lack a reasonable suit and a smarter candidate at the job interview may be taken on in preference to the sartorially deprived one. If a child at school loses his play-time it is probable that the deprivation is intended as a punishment. Equally well a deviant child may be dispossessed of a toy he has brought to school and deprived of its use until home time. Even these commonplace examples illustrate that it is difficult to use the word deprivation without introducing ideas which take us beyond simple 'lack', 'loss' or 'dispossession'.

The word deprivation tends not to be used in the simple though quite proper, way illustrated above; its use is more likely to occur during reference to different issues which relate to aspects of a person's environment. Ainsworth illustrates the diffuseness of the concept which underlies the word as follows:

Maternal deprivation has been used...to cover nearly every undesirable kind of interaction between mother and child - rejection, hostility, cruelty, over-indulgence, repressive control, lack of affection and the like.<sup>2</sup>

The term deprivation has been found 'both restricting and logically misleading in that the conditions of disadvantage included under 'deprivation' [are] often characterized as much by excess [of stigma, of deviant role models, of stressful experiences, etc.] as by 'lack' the problems often existing in what is present as much as in what is lacking.<sup>3</sup> Far from being a neutral term used simply to describe 'lack', 'loss' or 'dispossession', Rutter and Madge suggest:

The word almost functions as a projective test in which each person reads into the concept his own biases and prejudices, regardless of how the word has been used in the article or book in question. The result has been an inordinate amount of fruitless friction and heat concerning words and their usage. This might be dismissed as mere academic disputation not worthy of further consideration were it not for the fact that behind the words lie people who continue to suffer from various forms of personal and social disadvantage. The term may generate semantic confusion but the human predicament is real enough.<sup>4</sup>

There are of course other simple definitions of deprivation than those already mentioned, for example,

'The removal or loss of something desired or needed',<sup>5</sup>

'The lack of satisfaction of need',<sup>6</sup>

and some lend themselves to subtle differences in interpretation but when it is prefixed by a qualifying word, such as 'social', 'cultural' or 'maternal', the reader is able to add his own views of such qualifying words to whatever understanding of deprivation that already exists and the complexity of the concept is further compounded. Ainsworth's words quoted above<sup>2</sup> elaborate upon and make further study necessary of the following definition of 'maternal deprivation

'Deprivation by child of the presence or love of mother',<sup>6</sup>

and the statement that

Social deprivation, or isolation, may disturb development and behaviour<sup>5</sup>

will only become fully meaningful if supported by examples of empirical findings. 'Cultural deprivation', challenged so fully by Keddle and her collaborators in Finker, Tailor...The Myth of Cultural Deprivation,<sup>7</sup> is only given partial meaning when it is described as 'deprivation undergone by an individual or group of the cultural satisfactions obtainable in a society'.<sup>6</sup> The prefix 'relative' may be seen to soften the impact of and even personalize the idea of deprivation. Reading<sup>6</sup> defines 'relative deprivation' in a general way as:

1. awareness by an individual of deprivation relative to others in the same category, and
2. awareness by the members of a group of deprivation relative to other similar groups.

but Theodorsan<sup>8</sup> introduces a degree of flippancy when he discusses the term. He sees 'relative deprivation' as:

deprivation or disadvantage measured not by objective standards but by comparison with the relatively superior advantages of others, such as members of a reference group whom one desires to emulate. Thus the mere millionaire can feel relatively disadvantaged among his multi-millionaire friends, as can the man with only a small yacht, the one-star general, etc.<sup>9</sup>

This last example illustrates how the term 'deprivation' may be used quite properly to describe situations in environments which would not normally be seen as 'deprived'. Runciman<sup>10</sup> has examined in some detail the concept of relative deprivation and his application of the notion to the contractual model of justice is mentioned later in this chapter.

It is found below that the word 'deprivation' is avoided by some authors: for example, the term 'disadvantaged' is frequently used instead of 'deprived' and 'poverty' is seen by some as a possible alternative word relating to those who are truly deprived. As the discussion continues with consideration of 'Deprivation - the idea' clearly more will have to be said about the meaning of the word but it is hoped that

the foregoing is sufficient to emphasize the need to enquire of subjects taking part in this research project what they understand the word 'deprivation' to mean: this must be done before attempts are made to understand the significance of the concept in the work of teachers and others concerned.

## 2. Deprivation - the idea

From the above it is clear that the word needs to receive more than cursory attention: if the ideas which underlie the word 'deprivation' are to be understood then its usage, particularly in official circles, requires close examination. It is suspected that the ideas which lie behind the use of the word are responsible for much that is unjust, hurtful, demeaning and wasteful of talent, particularly as they are applied to children at school.<sup>11</sup> It seems possible though that many of those with influence who use the word and the concepts that go with it, such as teachers, social workers and some kinds of official, are often unaware of the impact<sup>12</sup> their use of the very idea has upon the lives of people with whom they are concerned.

It was noticed above that the term 'poverty' is thought by some to be an alternative to 'deprivation' and at a strictly common-sense level the idea of poverty can never be far-distant when 'deprived neighbourhoods' or 'deprived children' are being discussed. Indeed the concept of poverty abuts upon material about deprivation at many points in this thesis but it is not studied as a separate issue, nor is it considered a useful alternative to deprivation. It is possible to refer to tables and regulations prepared by the DHSS (e.g. those relating to Supplementary Benefit) and declare poverty to be a fixed and objectively determined feature of social life. When constructing scales

of payment today legislators and officials presumably have to look well beyond the subsistence levels identified by their forbears who administered the Poor Law and it is to be hoped that they have in mind what might constitute a decent standard of living in modern Britain. Undoubtedly this is a most difficult exercise and a great deal of effort has been and is being spent enquiring into such matters, particularly at government level: the social security and welfare systems depend upon ministers being accurately advised about where lines may be drawn while retaining political credulity. Of course poverty has to be viewed as a relative rather than an absolute concept and it clearly must relate to the expected level of life in any community. Yet, it is submitted that it is difficult to measure the expected level of life in any community in the precise way suggested by DHSS scales and judgemental factors tend to creep in to obscure objective measurement. Galbraith<sup>13</sup> has usefully written:

People are poverty-stricken when their incomes, even if adequate for survival, fall markedly below that of the community. Then they cannot have what the larger community regards as the necessary minimum for decency, and they cannot wholly escape, therefore, the judgement of the larger community that they are indecent. They are degraded for, in the literal sense, they live outside the grades or categories which the community regards as acceptable.

Galbraith's statement suggests that there is a marked difference between a survival income and one which will allow life to be lived at 'the necessary minimum for decency': not to achieve the latter puts the person or family beyond the pale. In this research project many families are seen by witnesses as being beyond the pale in that they live outside the grades or categories perceived as acceptable -- but the deprivation identified by witnesses seldom relates in any direct sense to poverty,

Corrigan gives an historical perspective to these thoughts on poverty and the adjacent concept of deprivation in the following:

Social work in this country...developed on the basis of a clear and strict distinction between the character of the deserving poor who were to be helped to help themselves and the undeserving on whom help would be wasted. And... virtually the same moral distinctions that underlay the beginnings of social work in 1900 have sustained and shaped its dramatic development since 1950. Indeed...Rutter and Madge conclude that emphasis has actually tended in recent years to shift from social conditions to personal problems. All that has really happened is that instead of the residuum of feckless, idle and drunken individuals of the past we hear about the residuum of feckless, violent, child-neglecting families of the present; the root problem is still seen just as clearly as a matter of the attributes of persons not of the structure of society.<sup>15</sup>

Corrigan suggests that if sociology has any general lesson to offer about deprivation and deviance - the two concepts are dealt with jointly in his article - it is that the real social problems of deprivation and deviance are not those of the 'criminal classes', the 'poor', the 'problem families' and all the others who are officially identified as deviant or deprived but the social construction of definition imposed by some members of society upon others.\*<sup>16</sup>

He sets up the convenient 'absolute perspective' in which the understanding of deviance and deprivation is seen as unproblematic: within this perspective they are capable of being objectively measured in a way that dehumanizes the problems.

...deviance is a matter of the violation of given moral codes and laws; deprivation is the condition of life below certain objectively determined standards...From a sociological point of view, therefore, the absolute perspective may have some advantages in establishing rule-of-thumb measures of deviance and deprivation.<sup>16</sup>

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\* In spite of Corrigan's wish that society should reject terms such as 'criminal classes', 'the poor' and even 'problem families' as the real social problems of deprivation and deviance are sought, his highlighting of the need to expose the social construction of definitions imposed by some members of society upon others is of particular relevance to this research project.



Corrigan finds the overwhelming disadvantage of the absolute perspective is that it encourages the policy-maker and the ordinary person alike to take social relations out of the explanation of social phenomena. Before going on to more convincing perspectives Corrigan illustrates how the absolute perspective has considerable currency in modern Britain and when the literature on deprivation is considered later in this chapter it will be found that the idea of the absolute perspective is frequently present within the texts examined.

The other perspectives described by Corrigan are

(a) The relative perspective - which he now sees as dominating mainstream sociological accounts of deviance and deprivation and having an increasing influence upon liberal social policy. Rather than establishing a new body of knowledge, this perspective allows a quantity of healthy doubt about things that used to be taken for granted<sup>17</sup> and clearly it is from this perspective that the author has approached the present study.<sup>18</sup>

(b) The relational perspective -

which sees deprivation and deviance first and foremost as predicaments created dialectically in the structured relationships of the deviant or deprived individuals to the rest of society...the relational perspective suggests that it is impossible to understand...people living on a low income unless we know how that small income is made small by the bigger incomes of other sections of society.... This approach forces us to look away from the deprived or the deviant as special, isolated or peculiarly problematic segments of our population...and to attend to the processes and relationships in society as a whole which generate deprivation and deviance as ways of life imposed on some people through their involvement with others.<sup>19</sup>

It was also mentioned above how the term 'disadvantaged' is often used in the literature instead of 'deprived' but, although the two words do relate to a similar concept, examination reveals a subtle difference in meaning. The disadvantaged child may be seen as having missed out

because of the nature of things in a particular society: a passive explanation tends to follow such a view which may be expressed as

It is thus when you are born into a lowly position in society

and from this all kinds of charitable ideas can flow as to how such children - often seen in earlier times as 'children of the deserving poor' - may be helped in their wretched situation. The disadvantaged child is, perhaps, not seen as having a claim on better provision by right. 'Deprived' on the other hand has a more positive ring to it: the deprived child has been born into an inferior cultural setting it is often asserted - and Galbraith's view<sup>13</sup> concerning 'the necessary minimum for decency' and living 'outside the grades or categories which the community regards as acceptable' as well as Corrigan's linkages between deprivation and deviance<sup>20</sup> come to mind. The only hope for the child so viewed it may seem is to wean him away from such a background and to train him - possibly through compensatory education - for a useful life in 'respectable society'. Another positive view is that a child deprived for whatever cause of reasonable opportunity in education or other fields has a right of access to proper provision and it is government's responsibility to see that this is available.

Little critical thought seems to have been given to the implications of the idea of deprivation in the various compensatory education schemes.

Plowden's recommendation that

Schools in deprived areas should be given priority in many respects<sup>21</sup>

may be seen as the basis for the launching of many such schemes in this country and, to be fair, the Plowden Committee did spell out in some detail what it saw to be characteristics of a 'deprived area'. Such detail is pondered upon later in the thesis, particularly in Chapter 3

when the request for H.P.A. status by the primary school upon which this research project is focused is considered. Demaine writes:

The notion of compensatory education usually involves the term 'deprivation'. Compensatory education programmes are concerned with policy towards children who in their schools and neighbourhoods are said to be deprived of both cultural and material circumstances considered necessary for the provision of an adequate educational environment. Of course...the designation of what is 'necessary' and 'adequate' is political in the sense that it involves policy and political ideology and the struggle for the conditions of implementation of policy.<sup>22</sup>

and he surveys the arguments of Keddie, Bernstein and others, reviewed later in this thesis, before examining social policy implications towards the end of his article. A further quotation from Demaine locates the nub of the argument against an uncritical acceptance of the word and idea of deprivation.

In the "taken for granted assumptions" of teachers, it is the culture of the children which is said to be regarded as deficient. Keddie merely changes the articulation of cultures, and the "mainstream culture" of the teachers is now categorized as deficient in that it does not encompass that of the child.<sup>23</sup>

Thus Demaine wonders about Keddie's 'redefinition of the problem' and recalls that the educational circumstances of certain groups of children remain largely the same; yet however convincingly he counters Keddie's arguments for the worthwhileness of minority cultures (seen by some as over-romantic<sup>24</sup>) Demaine demonstrates the need for a greater awareness of underlying theory when discussing the concept of deprivation.

It was not the intention in the foregoing to assess the adequacy of compensatory education: the idea was rather to point out the inevitability of confronting the concept of deprivation whenever it is discussed. Theoretical models are examined later in this chapter but it is useful at this moment to notice references to theory (or the lack of them) in the passages under scrutiny.

Demaine makes use of a Keddle reference to Plowden which is fully quoted below but his version starts with '...children from poor homes...' thus omitting anything about deficit theory - and this he manages to do throughout his article.

Those who argue the deficit theory (see, for example, the Report of the Plowden Committee) point out that the children come from poor homes, often slums, live in overcrowded conditions which deny access to privacy, and lack variety in their surroundings which leads to stimulus-deprivation resulting in cognitive deficiencies and a poor attitude to learning.

Demaine's quotation from this part of Tinker, Tailor... finishes with '...stimulus-deprivation' and he therefore misses Keddle's listing of further aspects of the deficit theory argument. The paragraph Keddle completes as follows:

It is argued that these children lack pre-school educational experience: books, educational toys and proper parental guidance and interest. The result is said to be that 'normal development' is inhibited and the child's maturational ceiling is lowered. His concentration and memory are said to be poor and his perceptions under-developed partly because of the lack of organization and both space and time in the home, which thus fails to provide a structured environment for the child and few possibilities of learning to discriminate and categorize.<sup>25</sup>

It is in Chapter 5 that findings and conclusions are presented but a general point on the above material is offered here and it is based upon the author's school experience as well as upon observation during this research project. The argument contained in this passage from Keddle is a familiar one and is frequently heard from educational psychologists in particular. To anyone who has taught in a school which serves an area seen as deprived it is also a convincing argument: such a person would probably be content to emulate Demaine and delete words thought to be unnecessary. In this case, for example, 'It is argued that', 'The result is said to be that' and the other 'are said to be'

could be left out and the paragraph made a statement of fact. In its revised state there would be little difficulty in its gaining acceptance by probably the majority of teachers of children from such areas. The statement would be received as common knowledge in the staffrooms of many E.P.A. schools: it seems highly probable that most teachers in those staffrooms would have learned to accept such a model during the process of professional socialization.

Clearly Keddie is concerned to build up a different image of the 'deprived child' and she looks at, for example, the indices used to measure degrees of structure in the home and notices how they tend to be drawn from such things as middle-class mealtime schedules,<sup>26</sup> finding however that there has been hardly any fieldwork in the area and that most data of this kind have been collected by questionnaire and interview methods in conditions alien to the respondents. She quotes Wax and Wax's 'vacuum ideology'<sup>27</sup> to describe this kind of research - teachers and administrators seeing the problem as one in which individual children present difficulties because they lack experiences supposedly needed to make them educable, rather than seeing them as children who are already experienced participants in a way of life, albeit one different from their own.

It is hoped that sufficient has been said in this preliminary look at the idea of deprivation to indicate general problem areas and to show what would seem to have particular application to children at school. In the field work reported in Chapter 4 many of the points already made are taken up but more immediately the initial discussion will be continued with a consideration of the way in which 'deprivation' may be seen as a label.

### 3. Deprivation - the label

Labelling theory asserts that deviance arises in the interaction between two parties: the labeller and the labelled.<sup>28</sup>

Although Corrigan has convincingly linked deprivation and deviance it may reasonably be argued that the two do not relate that closely, unless it is the comparability of conditions in which both tend to be rife that is under consideration. However, it is worth considering further the case made out by Hargreaves in relation to the labelling of deviants and seeing how it may apply to deprivation.

He sees this social process in terms of three elements:

First element: the commission of some act by the first party \*

Second element: the interpretation of that act as rule-breaking by the second party, leading him to define the first party as deviant and to accord him an appropriate treatment

Third element: the reaction of the first party to the second element.<sup>28</sup>

In terms of deprivation it might feasibly be claimed that

- (1) certain children, particularly in school, do appear and act in a certain way, adopting certain attitudes which \*
- (2) lead teachers and other professionals already mentioned to define such children as 'deprived' and thereafter to act

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\* It has been objected that the first element proposed by Hargreaves is label-neutral and it is queried whether any act proper can fail to have definite relations to (a) laws and (b) social mores as well as (c) individual actor's intentions. There is substance in this objection of course, but the author, nevertheless, finds the stages proposed by Hargreaves useful in that they help unpick the process of labelling. It is proposed that the application of the first element to the idea of deprivation will remind that this research enterprise rests upon how teachers and other professionals perceive the appearance, behaviour and attitudes of the children with whom they are concerned. If these characteristics and actions are seen as other than label-neutral in the first instance it is contended that a true appreciation of witnesses' views will not be forthcoming.

towards them in a way which is different from the way in which they act towards other children.

- (3) The children so defined are likely to react to their labelling and the perceived attitudes of teachers and others.

It is not difficult to apply these three elements of the labelling process and it will be found that (1) and (2) are very much at the heart of this research project and although the children are not themselves the subjects of this enquiry the substance of (3) is clearly of concern throughout a study of this kind. The sub-headings used by Hargreaves as he expands upon (3) in his article<sup>28</sup> are of interest when considering the way a child may accept and wear the 'deprived' label. They are:

The frequency of the labelling

The extent to which the pupil sees the teacher as a 'significant other' whose opinion counts

The extent to which others support the label

The public nature of the labelling.

Having perceived a child to be deprived - and, in all probability, having had the label confirmed by colleagues as well as by the pupil in the way he or she reacts to the attaching of the label - one of a teacher's responses is likely to be that he or she will have lowered expectations of that child's potential in school work. However well some children raised in 'the most deplorable circumstances',<sup>40</sup> may do at school, recent official reports<sup>29</sup> have drawn attention to the low expectations that teachers have of children from home backgrounds seen as 'deprived' and the Inner London Education Officer<sup>30</sup> has expressed the view that teachers' low expectations have been a chief limiting factor in the educational gains of urban primary schools in recent years. Her Majesty's Inspectors have subsequently confirmed the Education Officer's assessment in their report on schooling in the metropolis.<sup>31</sup>

The process of labelling and the likelihood of lowered teacher expectations form an important section when material is gathered together and conclusions are drawn in Chapter 5 but it is proposed to conclude this third brief introductory section with these confident words used by Nash after he had surveyed his evidence on how children seem to know what teachers think of them:

Children who know they are thought poor at school will  
be poor at school.<sup>32</sup> [The underlining is Nash's]

#### 4. Deprivation - the literature

##### (a) The difficulties of a literature survey

The very diffuseness of the concept of deprivation noted above makes an ordered study of the literature on deprivation a difficult undertaking but clearly notice must be taken of what has been written in the field during the early stages of a research project such as this. An examination of such texts soon convinces the reader of the need to be aware of authors' political stances and ideology takes on an increasing importance as the literature survey proceeds.

It is interesting to observe how Chazan and his colleagues meet the problems of a literature survey at the beginning of Deprivation and School Progress (1976):<sup>33</sup>

Because of its complexity, it will not be possible to survey this literature [on deprivation] comprehensively and in detail...

and they simply give references to previous work of relevance as the occasion arises throughout the volume. In their Chapter 2, 'The concept of deprivation', they attempt an examination of what is meant by deprivation and highlight the main sources which affect children 'particularly in relation to their progress and social adjustment in...school',<sup>34</sup> but the illustrative references offered from the literature are not recognized



as belonging to different ideological viewpoints. There is a clear-cut testimony which sees no real problem in terms like 'cultural deprivation' and 'linguistic deprivation': the following extract illustrates:

Objections to using the concepts of "cultural deprivation" and "linguistic deprivation", as well as that of "compensatory education" to remedy such deprivation, have been raised by several writers (Bernstein, 1970; Wilkerson, 1970) in that these terms seem to emphasize deficits in the family and the child, and to direct attention away from the failure of the school system to meet the needs of children who should be regarded as culturally different rather than deprived. While it may be agreed that labelling children or their families is unsatisfactory even if sometimes unavoidable, and that radical changes need to be made in the school system, it does seem useful to highlight what is lacking, from the developmental view, in the child's home background as well as in school conditions, since the deficits are well documented and are usually remedial, at least to some extent, by appropriate social and educational action. This is not to imply any criticism of parents, or denigration of particular life-styles, but merely to stress that it is desirable to look at factors in the child's total environment - at home, at school, and in the neighbourhood - if appropriate action on a comprehensive scale is to be taken.<sup>35</sup>

In this important passage Chazan et al offer just two references, Bernstein and Wilkerson, and even if they did not propose 'to survey this literature comprehensively and in detail',<sup>36</sup> surely there needs to be more indication than this of the considerable academic effort which has been directed towards these concepts in recent years?<sup>37</sup> However well substantiated their criteria for material deprivation may be, it is submitted that by failing to examine in detail the meaning of 'cultural deprivation',<sup>38</sup> to teachers and others responsible for the education and welfare of the children under consideration Chazan and his colleagues have detracted from the value of this considerable research project on compensatory education.

It is not being suggested that anything approaching a full literature survey should be expected in a work of the kind undertaken by Chazan and his team but the passing references scattered through the

text, often drawing attention to pieces of work in educational psychology (e.g. Evans, R and Ferguson, N (1974) 'Screening school entrants', Journal of the Association of Educational Psychologists 3, 6, 2-9), rarely provide the reader with an opportunity to get to grips with the concepts underlying the aspect of deprivation under consideration. Matthews<sup>39</sup> finds that research in the area of psychological and individual aspects of deprivation has been substantial and thinks it understandable that new researchers should wish to build upon this authoritative base but he hints at the dearth of sociological enquiry as he points to the considerable scope for research into deprivation in a wide number of different areas. The writer feels that the Chazan work well illustrates the points Matthews is making.

The survey of the literature on deprivation which the comments of Matthews preface is wide and when Cycles of Disadvantage was published in 1976 it was an important event in the ongoing scholarship relating to the concept of deprivation. Even so, the work has only been of limited use in the preparation of this thesis. Rutter and Madge conduct a thorough review of the literature relating to physical and psychological factors seeming to have a bearing upon deprivation and possible inter-generational continuities but they do not delve so thoroughly into the more limited literature relating to sociological aspects of deprivation. It becomes clear that they see individual shortcomings at the root of deprivation problems and this is emphasized in their conclusion headed 'Breaking out of cycles of disadvantage' when they leave the reader in little doubt that the weight of responsibility is upon individuals to make the break, strongly hinting that the more worthy manage to do this anyway.

It has been repeatedly emphasized that children raised in the most deplorable circumstances not infrequently develop into normal adults.<sup>40</sup>

Along the way they have too been impressed by those authors who see changes in the structure of society as the only sure antidote to deprivation.

We share the feelings of outrage concerning the appalling circumstances under which many families have to bring up their children.<sup>41</sup>

Even so, in the final analysis they do not place much faith in society's ability to remove poverty and social degradation and hold to the conviction that it is up to individuals to lift themselves from their deprived circumstances.

...but we delude ourselves if we think that nothing short of massive social change can influence cycles of disadvantage.<sup>41</sup>

Throughout this part of the thesis the ideological positions of a number of authors become evident but it is indicative of the complexity of a literature survey in this subject area that the partialities of the authors of a standard literature review should need to be looked at in this way. Rutter and Madge state:

We have simply attempted to review research findings and concepts as objectively as we could, and in so doing to avoid taking any one theoretical position. This book does not present "a view", nor does it provide a prescription for policy. Naturally, we have our own concepts and views on what is most important in the field we have reviewed. But, although our reading of the evidence has inevitably been coloured by our own training, experience and personalities, we have tried to avoid the excessive intrusion of our own theoretical constructions.<sup>42</sup>

Even so, it is contended that Rutter and Madge had to adopt a definite stance in order to write the book at all. The final paragraph of their 'Plan of the book' (p. 12) gives a good indication of the enormity of their task:

...the concluding chapter brings together some of the conceptual issues which emerged from our review of the literature but it does not attempt to summarize all the findings. The book as a whole is a summary of research and to summarize the summary seemed a pointless exercise. Unfortunately, the subject is too complex to be dealt with by a few succinct conclusions and we request the reader's indulgence and patience in asking that the book be read as a whole.<sup>43</sup>

The above points up a few of the difficulties inherent in attempting a survey of the wide and often highly controversial literature on deprivation. In the succeeding pages selections from relevant texts will be examined but an impartial survey is not possible as attempts are made to trace a conceptual course, preparing the way for an examination of the empirical work carried out in this research project.

(b) In search of an objective view of deprivation

For their study Chazan and his associates decided that deprivation would be considered in terms of 'material conditions at home, particularly family poverty, overcrowding and inadequate care, and also in the sense of a lack of cultural (particularly sensory and linguistic) stimulation'.<sup>44</sup> They had early on found the concept of deprivation a complex one: it had been postulated that there was no clear-cut homogeneous category of children who could be picked out as 'deprived' or who had definite and specific characteristics which are invariably associated with deprivation and this led them to seek criteria for deprivation which would be as precise as possible.<sup>45</sup> The sub-headings of their Chapter 2, 'The concept of deprivation', indicate the factors which they set out to measure objectively:

1. Deprivation arising out of home conditions

A. Material deprivation

- (i) Poverty
- (ii) Bad housing
- (iii) Inadequate care

B. Cultural deprivation

- (i) Sensory deprivation
- (ii) Linguistic deprivation
- (iii) Lack of parental interest in child's education

C. Emotional deprivation

- (i) Maternal deprivation
- (ii) Absence of the father

## 2. Deprivation arising from school conditions

- (i) Inadequate buildings and amenities
- (ii) Lack of appropriate stimulation
- (iii) Lack of continuity in teaching \*
- (iv) Lack of satisfactory relationships with other children

## 3. Deprivation arising from conditions in the neighbourhood

Inner urban areas  
Housing estates  
Rural isolation

### Summary (concept of deprivation)

Children may be deprived in a variety of ways... However, while deprivation cannot be thought of as a unitary concept, it is important in view of the interaction between the different sources of deprivation, to look also at the effects of various kinds of deficit found in combination.

- (\* Other factors might well have been considered here - for example the pupil-teacher ratio and syllabuses available - but, from the point of view of this research project, the lack of any attempt to measure teachers' attitudes is seen as a serious omission.)

They have collated measurable data relating to all these headings in their 500-page volume and it would be difficult to fault the objectivity of their work. However, the point has to be made that in Chapter 2, where they purport to examine the concept of deprivation, they have allowed their single-minded pursuit of precision in measurement to crowd out any aspect of the concept which might have ideological connotations.

It may seem fair enough to write:

In view of the complex nature of the concept of deprivation, it is as well to avoid sweeping generalisations about deprived children...

However, the text continues

...or to suggest, as Frank Riessman (1962) does, that a well-defined portrait can be drawn of them<sup>46</sup>

and this underrates one of the most valuable pieces of work in this field at that time. It would appear that many Americans were unaware that such a debilitating thing as 'cultural deprivation' was seen to exist within their society, urgently requiring attention. Chazan et al could usefully

have spent time justifying their rejection of Riessman's convincing portrait. Other researchers than Chazan and his associates have urgently sought objectivity as they have addressed themselves to the problem of deprivation and Kelsall and Kelsall (1971) reasonably state<sup>47</sup>

...we cannot be content with blanket terms such as working class or minority ethnic group. We have instead to go behind such broad categories and try to get as close as we can to just what it is, within the framework of being, say, white and lower working class or black and from an urban ghetto, which tends to handicap some of these children in their school lives. The predisposing factors we are seeking, therefore, are features of the child's environment (other than the school environment) to which the unfavourable symptoms displayed by him at school are directly traceable.<sup>48</sup>

They do not seem to be bound by the limitations of an 'absolute perspective'<sup>49</sup> as they seek items capable of objective measurement.

Their discussion of 'predisposing factors' contains much that reminds the reader it is human beings living in real social situations who are the subject-matter. They use categories as a purely temporary device to help clarify the position and their chosen headings, set down below, are indicative of their approach.

#### 1. Material poverty:

It has always been obvious to teachers in the poorer sectors of large cities that children who came to school ill-clothed, ill-fed or tired from lack of sleep could not hope to keep abreast of their fellow-pupils in their learning...<sup>50</sup>

Material poverty would seem to be so obvious and easily measurable, but the evidence presented in Chapter 4 of this thesis introduces an element of doubt into this assumption.

#### 2. Experiential poverty:

Quite a different kind of poverty, whose effects may gravely handicap children just as severely, is poverty of experience. Though such a term could be taken to embrace virtually all that is lacking in a child's environment, it is normally used to cover a somewhat narrower but still formidable range of missing elements. This range...covers lack of visual, tactile and auditory stimulation in the child's home.<sup>51</sup>

Clearly this is unlikely to be as obvious as material poverty and therefore must be harder to quantify. The Kelsalls cite Deutsch's researches<sup>52</sup> and mention suggestions that a sparsity of 'manipulative'\* objects in the home may have adverse effects on the development of the child's abilities, that a child may lack practice in auditory discrimination and thereby be hindered in developing ability to read and that 'indiscriminate'\*\* noise in the environment may mean that a child actually learns to be inattentive and finds it difficult to sustain attention at school. The Kelsalls emphasise how material conditions play a large part in experiential poverty of the kind here suggested and see overcrowding as a particularly significant factor. It is interesting to notice that overcrowding, as can be measured from Census data, is not a demonstrable problem in the case of the council estate with which this research project is concerned.

### 3. Family size and structure

Are there specific features of the family size and structure situation which are linked, in some kind of cause-and-effect relationship, with the subsequent behaviour and attitudes of the children?

The Kelsalls are in no doubt that large families and poverty have always tended to go together and in this thesis there are many illustrations of how important the recording of family size is seen to be when considering the concept of deprivation. Here would seem to be a factor which can be precisely measured in every instance - though an education welfare officer who contributes to the evidence presented in Chapter 4 does cast doubt upon school records of family composition - and bodies such as the

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\* Presumably Deutsch means objects which lend themselves to manipulation.

\*\* Perhaps television sets, radios, record players, etc., simply left on in the home as well as heavy traffic noise, the sounds of industry, pubs., discos and noisy neighbours outside.

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National Children's Bureau make full use of available data to demonstrate how children from large families tend to under-perform at school.

Concerning family structure the Kelsalls write

Although we may no longer subscribe to the cruder formulations of the broken-homes-lead-to-child-delinquency idea, it is perhaps natural nevertheless to suppose that being brought up without the active participation of a father must have lasting and probably adverse effects on the children.<sup>53</sup>

Although in the literature on deprivation single-parent status is seen as a fairly firm objective category, the Finer Report's<sup>54</sup> (1974) estimation that some 10 per cent of all families in Britain contained just one parent was hardly a precise measurement and in the evidence presented in Chapter 4 of this thesis doubt is sometimes expressed about family structure - it even being suggested that family arrangements can be 'transitory in nature' and change overnight. The imprecision of details about family structure is of increasing concern to teachers who are genuinely trying to understand the home situation of their pupils.

#### 4. Family and neighbourhood patterns of living

...no one would deny that a child's behaviour when he first comes to school is likely to reflect, to an important extent, what he has internalized from his family and neighbourhood setting.

and the Kelsalls quote Goldberg thus

...the child's view of society is limited by his immediate family and neighbourhood where he sees a struggle for survival which sanctions behaviour viewed as immoral in the society at large.<sup>55</sup>

Clearly this heading would not seem to include factors which lend themselves to objective measurement and when the Kelsalls point out the importance of the child's image of school acquired from his or her parents it appears they are venturing into an area of enquiry which depends upon subjective judgments. However, they do quote a London survey<sup>56</sup> in which it was found that more than half of the middle class



mothers interviewed encouraged the child by adopting a positive attitude towards first going to school by such remarks as 'You'll meet lots of new friends there: there are plenty of new things to do and lots of nice games to play'. As many as a third of the working class mothers, on the other hand, compared with only a tenth of their middle class counterparts, prepared the child for a passive role at school saying, in effect, 'When you go to school, you shut up and do what the teacher says'. Although the statistical tables emanating from research of this kind may give the impression of precise measurement it is contended that much research into the whole question of child-rearing practices does not produce results which can be said to help towards an objective view of deprivation. Yet even if the use of such reports does not help the Kelsalls to produce a convincingly objective picture their discussion under this heading is helpful towards their overall aim of breaking down the use of 'blanket terms'\* such as deprivation.

##### 5. Regional and local differences

Does a child in one region or area in Britain...have different educational opportunities from a child of similar ability, ethnic origin and social background in another area?

The Kelsalls go on to consider the evidence of recorded educational performance in different parts of the country and the statistical data supporting, for example, a North/South split is convincing. The recent highlighting of resource allocation at this time of educational cuts has meant an even greater concentration upon comparative data of this kind and area educational deprivation is frequently pointed out by the mass media. Consideration of the objective reality of educational provision in different areas is, of course, an important socio-political

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\* A major purpose of this thesis is to break down 'deprivation' into what are seen by teachers and other witnesses as its constituent parts. It has been suggested above (pp. 23-4) that indiscriminate labelling may result unless due regard is given to what makes up the label.

activity and the facts need to be revealed for all to see but the conceptions of deprivation with which this research project is concerned are not those generally used when differences between regions are being discussed. It is attempted here to discover how a sample of professional people view the concept as it applies to one housing estate. Even so, in the evidence given by witnesses reference is made to other areas and comparisons are made, in some cases referring to differentials in educational opportunity. It is hoped that conclusions offered in Chapter 5 will have wide application.

Two studies have been consulted in this illustration of how objective criteria are sought against which to measure deprivation. Chazan et al (1976) emphasised the need for precise criteria with which to measure degrees of deprivation during their extensive field study, while the Kelsalls (1971) attempted to find categories which would help them to break down 'blanket terms' such as deprivation during their examination of the literature on social disadvantage and educational opportunity. In its insistence upon objective measurement it has been submitted (pp. 29-30) that the Chazan study has neglected the subjective meaning of deprivation to teachers and others concerned with the children under consideration in their study. The Kelsalls, on the other hand, have used less precise criteria, which they call 'predisposing factors', simply to provide a framework within which to discuss the consequences of the various perceived disadvantages. It is suggested that the latter study has left more room for the 'deprived child' to have a human face.

Possibly those of us who possess social gatekeeping powers are conditioned to use the complex term 'deprivation' without due consideration - perhaps it is 'received wisdom' acquired during training/professional socialization - and we make little attempt to assess the impact upon others of the ideas being handled. If there is an apparent shallowness

in the evidence later offered by witnesses it may be that concepts of the kind here being examined need the deep consideration of users if casual - but nevertheless harmful - labelling is not to ensue. Stereotypes do not help considered thought about the concept of deprivation, but the basis of the stereotype of the deprived school pupil has been formed from objectively measurable data. In the literature the characteristics of 'the deprived child' may take the following form. His father, who may well be absent, is probably an unskilled manual worker; the child may have been born early or late, be abnormally light or short, have squints, stammers or difficulty in co-ordinating his movements, be a bed-wetter or a nail-biter, have suppurating ears, and so on.<sup>57</sup> It is not difficult to build upon this basis and relate such characteristics to unsatisfactory home circumstances and to some kind of deficient cultural background thus completing a stereotype which will be reflected in teacher-expectations with implications for school performance and behaviour.

To sustain a discussion on deprivation a degree of common knowledge is needed: this knowledge is likely to stem from the kind of stereotype instanced above.

Elsewhere in the thesis objective measurement of deprivation is discussed, for example in Chapter 3 when the generally-used indices of deprivation are examined in the context of the study neighbourhood. The above is intended to illustrate the need to consider criteria when studying the concept of deprivation but also to warn of the consequences of seeking too-precise measurement of the human factors involved.

(c) A cycle of deprivation?

Rutter and Madge's brief<sup>58</sup> was to review the evidence on transmitted deprivation and they remind:

The concept of a cycle of deprivation began with the question: "why is it that...deprivation and problems of maladjustment so conspicuously persist?"

[Joseph, 1972]<sup>59</sup>

and go on to consider the accuracy of the assumptions behind the question to conclude that, in spite of marked improvements in overall standards of living, disadvantage is still very much with us. Their survey grew out of a recommendation by the Department of Health and Social Security/Social Science Research Council Joint Working Party on Transmitted Deprivation.

This Working Party had been convened on the initiative of the then Secretary of State for the Social Services, Sir Keith Joseph, in June, 1972. He had called attention to the persistence of deprivation, despite general economic advance, and to the evidence that the same families tended to be deprived generation after generation.... If ways could be found of breaking this cycle or this recurrence of deprivation in successive generations, it would be valuable for policy. The Secretary of State and his Department recognized that there were many unclear and controversial features about the concept. The task of the Working Party was to consider whether research on it was feasible and if so by what means.<sup>60</sup>

A survey of literature, to draw together the results of existing research on deprivation - both British and American, was seen as a necessary prelude to any major programme of research.<sup>61</sup>

Thus we learn from Rutter and Madge that the concept of a cycle of deprivation began with Sir Keith Joseph's question 'Why is it that... deprivation and problems of maladjustment so conspicuously persist?'<sup>62</sup> At the time, it may be recalled, considerable political capital was made out of Sir Keith's speech at a conference arranged by the Pre-school Playgroups Association on the 'cycle of deprivation': a number of his statements came to be widely quoted, for example,

...inadequate people tend to be inadequate parents and inadequate parents tend to rear inadequate children<sup>63</sup>

and some of his opponents went as far as to suggest that he was recommending mass sterilization or worse at the lower levels of society. Undeterred by the volume of criticism he made a further speech on this theme in Birmingham some two years later<sup>64</sup> declaring 'The balance of our population, our human stock is threatened'. Robinson<sup>65</sup> reports as follows:

He went on to refer to an increasing number of children being born to mothers in the under twenties group, that some of these mothers are of low intelligence and that social class four and five produce a third of all births. These statements were linked to conclude that the production of problem children was on the increase. "They are producing problem children, the future unmarried mothers, delinquents, denizens of our borstals, subnormal educational establishments, prisons, hostels for drifters." The solution to these problems is contraception, the answer for both Wright and Lunn<sup>66</sup> and for Goddard.<sup>67</sup> Purt (1952) predicted that IQ was declining each generation and would continue to do so as the least intelligent produced large families and the most intelligent small families. Again the solution is simple, restrict births. The deprived and the least intelligent breed prodigiously, they will overrun the world of decent upstanding, moral people....\*

The above is a clear example of how political fervour can be generated when 'the deprived' are under discussion, yet it cannot be said with confidence that, in focusing attention on the cycle of deprivation, Joseph was necessarily pursuing the policy of Conservative extremists for in 1974 his Socialist successor, Mrs Barbara Castle, endorsed D.H.S.S. support for the research programme he had initiated. But when one considers his article (1979) in 'The Class War' series of The Guardian<sup>68</sup> it is difficult not to read a strong political motive into what he has written. The cycle of deprivation which he identified in his speeches of 1972 and 1974 and the alarming prognostications which he related to

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\* More hopefully, it has been pointed out (Cosin, B. 1982) that IQ figures show an upward drift nationally, suggesting (if anything) that environment is countering such alleged trends. It is also argued that biologically (and obstetrically) it may be a favourable indication for mothers to be increasingly in the under-twenties group.

that cycle were based upon flimsy evidence but clearly it suits his case in the 1979 article to doubt the existence of such a cycle. In expressing a fear that the uncritical acceptance of the cycle of deprivation theory will emphasise individual factors and ignore the structural factors, Robinson<sup>69</sup> cites the research of Goddard (1912) who as director of research at a school for 'feeble-minded girls and boys' looked into possible causes for their condition. Robinson writes how 'having looked at the extent of "feeble-mindedness" across the generations Goddard is able to inform us that "no amount of work in the slums or removing the slums from our cities will ever be successful until we take care of those who make the slums what they are". The responsibility is that of the intelligent people in society, they must guide the feeble-minded and ensure that they do not damage the fabric of society. Such is the power of Goddard's research that he is persuaded intelligence is immediately visible. He reports one of his field workers visiting a family where "the father, though strong and vigorous, showed by his face that he had only a child's mentality".'<sup>70</sup>

The main empirical work upon which Sir Keith Joseph's thesis rested was that of Wright and Lunn (1971).<sup>71</sup> From the mid-fifties some 120 Sheffield families perceived by health visitors as 'problem families' had been studied and by 1968 they were known to have between them 855 children (of whom 577 were over 16), that is seven children per family. At this later date it had only been possible for the researchers to contact 449 of these offspring, most now approaching adulthood, and one-third showed that they too were well on the way to becoming 'problems': a further third seemed perfectly satisfactory but the remaining third were found to be in a state of 'perilous equilibrium', that is, if luck was not on their side (and chronic misfortune does seem to be a factor in the

lives of people so placed) then they too could well arrive in the problem zone. In fact the speculative arithmetic of Wright and Lunn produced the assumption that the 120 problem families identified in the mid-fifties were likely to be responsible for a further 250 problem families.

It is significant to note that in this Wright and Lunn examination of the way in which deprivation is transmitted no mention is made of the framework of officialdom within which such cycles of deprivation are seen to persist. The task of the research programmes launched after the Joseph speeches was to examine the mechanics of transmission. Robinson writes:<sup>72</sup>

How does deprivation persist; how do the disadvantaged manage their life chances; what is their life world? Part of their objective career is within a framework of officialdom, a world of social workers, education welfare officers, school teachers, probation officers and supplementary benefit officers. Each of these professional groups has a different ethos, a different pattern of training and a different view as to why the deprived may be a problem. What is the impact of these groups on the formation of the self-image of the deprived? Do the officials enhance or deny the life of the most disadvantaged?

These words help focus upon something which is being attempted in this thesis. Because the very conception of deprivation is being held as problematic and it is suspected that certain professional workers influence 'the formation of self-image' it is deemed necessary to know of the conceptions of deprivation held by these social gatekeepers and such knowledge, it is proposed, will help towards an appreciation of the impact professional groups have upon those seen as deprived.

The 1979 article by Sir Keith Joseph in 'The Class War' series of The Guardian<sup>68</sup> merits careful examination after the above references to this politician's views on deprivation.

It would appear that Joseph had an uncomplicated view of Britain's class structure when he took responsibility for the Department of Health

and Social Security in the early 1970s but the consistency with which the young criminals he encountered during duty visits to approved schools hailed from the most deprived backgrounds brought him to the belief that there must exist a tightly constraining cycle of deprivation. He became convinced that those born to 'unloving and unskilled parents' would in all probability themselves become unskilful and unloving parents. It seemed to him that the only solution would be to improve the quality of parenthood but as he felt that 'no government in a free society either can or should try to do such things' (i.e., take measures to improve the quality of parenthood) he thought his was 'a pretty negative piece of analysis'. In the last few lines of his first paragraph Sir Keith leaves the reader puzzling about the measures he had in mind for governments in free societies not to take but presumably he is advocating that the familial practices of even the humblest must be respected.

Nevertheless, at the time Joseph thought that his 'reinvented' cycle of deprivation exposed something very real about mankind and in his second paragraph he goes on to give what is apparently a very abbreviated and inaccurate version of the Sheffield study mentioned above. He writes

...of those 800 families most of them had been known to the church and welfare organisations for five generations. That seemed to me to prove that which I had asserted, that there is a cycle.

In the Wright and Lunn study<sup>71</sup> it will be remembered that it was 120 Sheffield families that had been identified in the mid-1950s and that these families were known to have had between them 835 children by 1968. Thus for Joseph to write in this general way of some 800 families is inaccurate - particularly as at least one-third of the offspring who had reached or were currently approaching adulthood were seen as perfectly satisfactory according to the criteria used by the health visitors.



He moves on to make brief mention of the research which he set in train in 1972:

I took some of your money as taxpayers, and I devoted it to research into this concept, and the research is now emerging. The research shows that there isn't a cycle of deprivation. As many people escape from the way of life of unloving and unskilful parents as are imprisoned by it. Almost everyone one meets has been to some extent disadvantaged in youth in some way or another, and from the most unpromising backgrounds the most superb human beings emerge. So, I have been slightly humbled and relieved and glad.<sup>73</sup>

The article then leads into a discussion of social class and it is Sir Keith's contention that the very concept of class damages the nation. He sees Britain to be an infinitely mobile society with an infinite number of snakes and ladders. It is interesting to set this optimistic testimony against what was said during his speeches of 1972 and 1974 and consider, for example, his statements about social classes four and five producing a third of all births and trace how these linked with his concern for the way in which problem children were on the increase.

Following the Joseph speeches there were indications in the press that a large-scale research project was to be launched but it was in the Social Science Research Council's Newsletter of April 1975<sup>74</sup> that the writer discovered details of the DHSS/SSRC research into transmitted deprivation. In August of that year he interviewed Robinson<sup>75</sup> at Keele University about the conceptual and empirical study of transmitted deprivation in which the latter was engaged with Coffield<sup>76</sup> as part of the national project. As already indicated the preface to Rutter and Mudge's Cycles of Disadvantage<sup>77</sup> shows the relationship of their literature survey to the DHSS/SSRC Project but Sir Keith Joseph's statement in his July 1979 article

'The research shows there isn't a cycle of deprivation',<sup>78</sup> made the author concerned as submission date for this thesis drew near that evidence may have been gathered in the national project which would seriously affect existing knowledge about the concept of deprivation. However, a telephone call to the Council's offices<sup>79</sup> brought assurance that, although preliminary reports were starting to appear, full findings and the final summary report would be contained in a series of volumes to be published by Heinemann, starting about a year hence. In fact the second volume of this series, *Studies in Deprivation and Disadvantage 2*,<sup>76</sup> came to hand during the editing of this chapter. In the above telephone conversation<sup>79</sup> the Council's Information Officer assured the writer that Rutter and Hodge's literature survey was still the most authoritative work in the field. It seemed, therefore, that Sir Keith's statement in The Guardian article<sup>78</sup> was premature - even if there had been some evidence in the preliminary reports which tended to negate the cycle of deprivation.

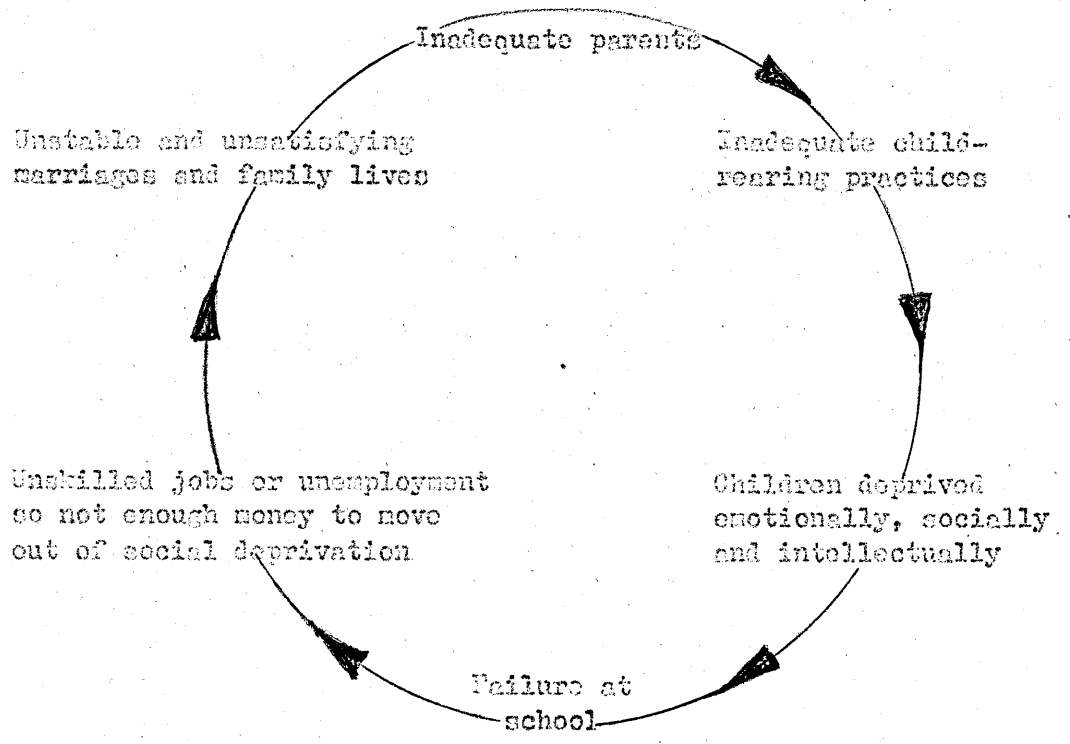
Much of the above is concerned with Sir Keith Joseph's questions on the feasibility of a cycle of deprivation existing in present-day Britain but before leaving this introductory section on the topic a few more general comments would seem useful.

Coffield et al write:<sup>80</sup>

The idea of a cycle of deprivation is not a new one, although the phrase was made popular by a leading British politician, Sir Keith Joseph, in the early 1970s. As early as 1921, a book was published by Jamieson Hurry under the title Poverty and its Vicious Circles. This book contained a number of diagrams of "vicious circles" all of which were said to lead to poverty. Hurry himself traced back the earliest use of this term, as applied to social problems, to a book by De Gerando in 1839.

They look briefly at earlier uses of the idea - both in the Introduction and in their Appendix, 'A cycle of deprivation? A critical review' -

before returning to a closer analysis of Sir Keith Joseph's speeches of 1972 and 1974. They reproduce a useful diagram of Sir Keith's cycle of deprivation, as envisaged by Holman:<sup>61</sup>



In the author's compensatory education article<sup>62</sup> a similar diagram is reproduced from Williams (1970) Language and Poverty to illustrate 'the poverty cycle' and it is interesting to compare this diagram with the one above constructed by Holman. Whereas Williams labels the righthand side of the cycle 'sociocultural phase' and identifies 'developmental disadvantage' and 'educational disadvantage' the Holman diagram spells out the detail identified by Joseph in his consideration of the cycle of deprivation, namely, 'inadequate parents', 'inadequate child-rearing practices', 'children deprived emotionally, socially and intellectually', and 'unstable and unsatisfying marriages and family lives'. Williams labels the lefthand side of his poverty cycle diagram 'socioeconomic phase' and specifies 'employment disadvantage' and 'economic disadvantage' but in the Holman diagram the only reference to socioeconomic factors is

'unskilled jobs or unemployment so not enough money to move out of social deprivation'.

Though very similar, the Williams diagram is more general than the Holman diagram and it may be seen from the supporting text of the author's article<sup>82</sup> that it provides a convenient framework within which to discuss deprivation from a deficit point of view, for example:

People trapped within the poverty cycle are seen as being of a culture or subculture - different from "normal" people: their "backgrounds, attitudes and general capabilities have failed to equip them adequately for a life of opportunities" (Williams, 1970). They are seen as belonging to a disadvantaged culture and so it is quite reasonable for those adopting this view to speak of the children coming to school from such a milieu as being culturally deprived as well as socially disadvantaged: linguistic deprivation and similar terms follow easily.

The Holman diagram, however, does not need even the simple kind of analysis attempted in the compensatory article: it spells out in stark terms the characteristics of the cycle of deprivation Sir Keith was convinced existed at the time of his 1972 and 1974 speeches.

Towards the end of the previous section of this chapter, headed 'In search of an objective view of deprivation', it was declared that, although a degree of generalisation would be possible in Chapter 5, this research project was essentially concerned with comparisons within the study neighbourhood: individuals' conceptions of deprivation were being examined within a local context and in consequence widely-used criteria of deprivation would only be of interest where they helped to amplify subjects' testimonies. Similarly, whether or not there can be said to exist intra or inter-generational cycles of deprivation does not seem to be of crucial importance in this search for individual conceptions of deprivation - although it will be seen in Chapter 4 that some witnesses are convinced, as was Sir Keith Joseph in the early 1970s, that

certain 'problem' families are caught up in a cycle of deprivation from which escape is virtually impossible.<sup>83</sup>

The study of Coffield et al (1980)<sup>84</sup> is concerned with the complex lives of four 'problem' families. They find the cycle of deprivation, with its 'straightforward, linear inevitability',<sup>85</sup> too simple an idea and suggest a 'web of deprivation...depicts more accurately the dense network of psychological, social, historical and economic factors which have either created or perpetuated problems for these families'.<sup>85</sup> However, they feel unable to set their findings within any one theoretical perspective and are suspicious of 'explanations which seek either to lay the total blame for deprivation on the inadequate personalities of the poor or to indict only the economic structure of capitalist society'.<sup>86</sup> There follows below a consideration of some theoretical models of deprivation.

(d) Some theoretical models of deprivation

Watson<sup>87</sup> offers four models of deprivation and lists the deficit system model, the simple cultural pluralism model, the radical vanguard model and the alternative competences model. He finds that each of these models tends to be regarded by its proponents as being an exhaustive conceptualisation and it is proposed to examine them in turn and make reference to important related literature.

(i) Deficit system model

The deficit system model can be said to have dominated social science, particularly in America, since the 1920s and it was brought into prominence in this country with the publication of Bernstein's article 'A critique of the concept of compensatory education'.<sup>88</sup> Watson defines the model as follows:

This model conceives of minority group members as being somehow inadequately socialized into the core cultural values and competences engendered by the dominant... culture. This inadequate socialization is held, often tautologically, to account for the purportedly higher rates of deviance and mental disturbance among minority group members, as well as for the higher rates of "educational failure" of these members.<sup>89</sup>

The conception of inadequate socialisation underlies most compensatory education programmes in that they are 'generally oriented toward preventing the development of deficits within children by, for instance, developing preschool schemes which culturally...compensate for the alleged lack of acquisition of...skills within the family and local community'. Thus the 'enrichment' programmes.<sup>90</sup>

Writing about a plethora of such schemes in America from the late 1950s, Bernstein draws attention to the fact that very few sociologists were involved in these studies because until this point education had been for them a low status research area. The work was generally being carried out by psychologists and it would seem that scant attention was given to the dominance of the deficit system model until sociologists such as Friedman<sup>91</sup> became involved in the movement later in the 1960s.

At a basic sociological (and even stereotypical) level the deficit system model assumes

a conception of society as a social system kept in stable equilibrium by adherence to a single, consensual set of shared values. Man is seen as a social tabula rasa, needing to be restrained by socialization and social controls in order to adjust to the social system and thus to perpetuate its stability.<sup>92</sup>

Watson goes on to show from this that a disproportionate number of minority group children can be unjustly considered deficit systems in that they have not internalised at a sufficient pace the moral values and skills assumed by the representatives of the dominant culture - e.g., the school. Social control is seen to be lacking in his home and social control agencies

in the wider community seem to have little impact. There can be no doubt in the mind of the deficit system theorist that there exists a common value system<sup>93</sup> incorporated within the dominant culture and children who fail to internalise these common values are culturally deprived.

The novel (Hunter, 1954) and film The Blackboard Jungle generated widespread interest and concern about the 'deprived' children of American cities and Riessman's The Culturally Deprived Child (1962)<sup>94</sup> had considerable impact upon opinion at a time when deficit system theory was virtually unassailed. The latter was written for a fairly small and specialised audience but it gained the attention of a much wider audience as the Great Society campaign got under way with the war on poverty and increased civil rights activity, in fact it was selected as one of the notable books of the year by the American Library Association. From Riessman Americans learned that while in 1950 one child in every ten in fourteen of their largest cities was 'culturally deprived' by 1960 the number had risen to one in three. Riessman was quick to qualify 'culturally deprived' - they did possess a culture of their own - and he showed how, for his purposes, the term could be used interchangeably with 'educationally deprived' to refer to members of lower socio-economic groups who have limited access to education. Friedman<sup>95</sup> objects that Riessman uses the term 'culturally deprived' throughout the book 'because it is the term in current usage' but it is clear that Riessman did increase the public awareness and sensitivity in this knowledge area. He writes:

It is easy to say that we must understand the culture of the underprivileged. Most people would agree. The question is, what do we mean by a cultural approach? Some people seem to think that the culture of a group is equivalent to its environment. Therefore, the culture of lower socio-economic groups is seen to include inadequate housing, limited access to leisure facilities, and the like. We prefer to distinguish between the environment, or conditions of life, of a group,

and the culture of that group. We conceive the latter to be the methods that have evolved for coping with the conditions of life. Thus, 'culture' would include the traditions, values and mores of a specific group, many of which have a long history. Values and attitudes of the under-privileged that are relevant for the educator would include beliefs about punishment, authority, games, co-operation, competition...etc.<sup>96</sup>

More typical of the time was the work of Deutsch 'The disadvantaged child and the learning process',<sup>97</sup> and while the following extract may at first sight appear unremarkable it will be seen, on reflection, to fit the requirements of deficit system theory in that it contains the suggestion that children from certain home backgrounds are unlikely to respond to what is normally on offer in schools.

A child from any circumstance who has been deprived of a substantial portion of the variety of stimuli which he is maturationally capable of responding to is likely to be deficient in the equipment for learning.<sup>98</sup>

Seen strictly from the viewpoint of psychology this is certainly not unreasonable; in fact Deutsch relates what is written above to the following extract from Piaget:

the rate of development is in substantial part, but certainly not wholly, a function of environmental circumstances. Change in circumstances is required to force the accommodative modifications of schemata that constitute development. Thus, the greater the variety of situations to which the child must accommodate his behavioural structures, the more differentiated and mobile they become. Thus, the more new things a child has seen and the more he has heard, the more things he is interested in seeing and hearing. Moreover, the more variation in reality with which he has coped, the greater is his capacity for coping.<sup>99</sup>

Deutsch sees this emphasis upon the importance of variety in the environment as implying detrimental effects from a lack of variety, leading to a concept of 'stimulus deprivation' but wants the idea properly understood.

By this is not necessarily meant any restriction of the quantity of stimulation, but, rather, a restriction to a segment of the spectrum of stimulation potentially available. In addition to the restriction in variety,



from what is known of the slum environment, it might be postulated that the segments made available to these children tend to have poorer and less systematic ordering of stimulation sequences, and would thereby be less useful to the growth and activation of cognitive potential.<sup>100</sup>

Deutsch develops the idea of 'stimulus deprivation' and how it may affect a child's knowledge and comprehension as well as his perceptual discrimination skills, the ability to sustain attention, and the ability to use adults as sources of information and satisfying curiosity. He concludes that, in individual terms, a child is farther away from his maturational ceiling as a result of experiential poverty and this might well be a crucial factor in the poorer performance of the lower socio-economic children on standardised tests of intelligence.

On such tests, the child is compared with others of his own age. But if his point of development in relation to the maturational ceiling for his age group is influenced by his experience, then the child with restricted experience may actually be developed to a proportionately lower level of his own actual ceiling. If a certain quantum of fostering experience is necessary to activate the achievement of particular maturational levels, then perhaps the child who is deficient in this experience will take longer to achieve these levels, even though his potential may be the same as the more advantaged child. It might be that in order to achieve a realistic appraisal of the ability level of children, an 'experience' age rather than the chronological age should be used to arrive at norms.<sup>101</sup>

From his rather generalised discussion on 'stimulus deprivation' and maturational levels Deutsch turns to some of the specifics in a 'deprived' child's environment:

Visually, the urban slum and its overcrowded apartments offer the child a minimal range of stimuli...few, if any, pictures on the wall...objects in the household...toys, furniture...utensils, tend to be sparse, repetitious, and lacking in form and color variations...the child [has] few opportunities to manipulate and organize the visual properties of his environment and thus perceptually to organize and discriminate the nuances of his environment.<sup>102</sup>

And Deutsch goes on to list the advantages enjoyed by the middle-class child in creative play with every kind of parental encouragement. He avoids the term 'linguistic deprivation' but finds the 'lower-class home...not a verbally oriented environment' and this has implications for the development of auditory discrimination skills, he feels.

While the environment is a noisy one, the noise is not, for the most part, meaningful in relation to the child, and for him most of it is background. In the crowded apartments with all the daily living stresses, is a minimum of non-instructional conversation directed toward the child. In actuality, the situation is ideal for the child to learn inattention. Furthermore, he does not get practice in auditory discrimination or feedback from adults correcting his enunciation, pronunciation, and grammar.<sup>103</sup>

Disadvantaged children, found Deutsch, may learn to be inattentive in the pre-school environment and this further diminishes incoming stimulation; he also related memory to attentivity and found that the lack of interaction with parents experienced by many 'deprived' children in their early life was a factor which contributed to poor memory.

It is the adults who link the past and the present by calling to mind prior shared experiences. The combination of the constriction in the use of language and in shared activity results, for the lower-class child, in much less stimulation of the early memory function.<sup>104</sup>

The following sentence is also worth noticing:

Although I don't know of any data supporting this thesis, from my observations it would seem that there is a tendency for these children to be proportionately more present-oriented and less aware of past-present sequences than the middle-class child.<sup>104</sup>

Plenty of attention has been paid to this 1963 work of Deutsch because it illustrates, in spite of his tendency to be impressionistic, how the psychological emphasis which characterised most of the earlier writing about deprived children fits the deficit system model. The matter-of-fact flavour generated by Deutsch is also detectable in the

1976 work of Chazan et al considered above and, indeed, probably in all volumes where the author seeks an uncomplicated view of 'objective deprivation'. While it is not proposed to pass judgment upon those who hold to the deficit position at this stage, it is suggested that this model presupposes a conception of society which will not allow doubt to enter into discussion on values, standards, worthwhile skills and knowledge, attitudes and the whole range of activities seen as necessary to keep the social system in stable equilibrium. The absolute perspective proposed by Corrigan, as described earlier in this chapter under 'Deprivation - the idea' (see Note 16), is worth recalling at this point. Although it was seen as having the great advantage of simplicity and was shown to have certain advantages, e.g., in establishing rule-of-thumb measures of deviance and deprivation, it was also seen to have overwhelming disadvantages in that it encouraged the policy-maker and ordinary person alike to take social relations out of the explanation of social phenomena. It is proposed that those who use the deficit system model will need to think in terms of an absolute perspective and not be unduly concerned with the subjective reality of deprivation to those seen as deprived and to those who use the label. An example of how such an absolute perspective may be applied to the educational scene is provided by the following extract from Friedman's 'Cultural deprivation...'.<sup>95</sup> He has been commenting upon the 'extensive and flexible image appeal' of the idea of culturally deprived children and indicating how 'a broad spectrum of persons and publics of various ideological persuasions' had been persuaded to help trigger legislative action on the strength of the concept. Referring to those of his countrymen who may be seen as inclining towards the deficit theory view he writes:

Even to political and social conservatives, nationally supported educational programmes held out the hope of 'straightening out' and 'keeping straight' lower class children, of helping to make and keep them good, respectable, solid citizens, and of preventing the 'social dynamite' in the slums from exploding or re-exploding...

And he develops this theme in a wider context:

Christopher Jencks (1964) has suggested that the War on Poverty in the 1960s has also been basically conservative in this same sense that it primarily aims not only to make over the poor by educating them, but also by changing their 'wrong' skills, places of residence, personality traits, and fertility patterns, and to provide 'character building' in the lower-middle-class virtues: '...this approach has met with enthusiastic support from those middle-class Americans who feel that if "they" were just more like "us", everything would be all right'.<sup>105</sup>  
[Jencks, 1965]

Friedman's work is an important commentary in the sociology of knowledge and his considered views on cultural deprivation, although set in the context of American society of the 1950s and 1960s, must be taken into account in a study of the conceptions of deprivation. What he has to say about the theoretical and explanatory inadequacy of the concept of cultural deprivation and the negative stereotyping it has engendered is clearly of utmost value but his main objections have been summarised thus,

...the idea has been opposed as one based upon a piecemeal, patchwork, conservative-oriented approach to change<sup>106</sup>

and, as illustrated above, in showing the convenient way in which an absolute perspective has underlain legislative measures Friedman has demonstrated the attraction of the deficit system model to many involved in such reform.

The extent to which Friedman's work can be applied to Britain has to be pondered: clearly there are marked differences between the politics of America and the politics of Britain and the different class structures have to be taken into account. Cultural deprivation did not receive major

recognition in this country until the publication of the Plowden Report in 1967. This document tended 'to play down the influence of social class, setting against this the importance of parental attitudes, though these may in fact be the cultural components of class'.<sup>107</sup> The prevalence of cultural deprivation was implicit in the message of Plowden - the recommendation that there should be compensatory education through 'positive discrimination' confirmed this - though, like social class membership, it was well concealed.\* The apparent liberal philosophy of Plowden<sup>108</sup> has been brought into doubt over the years<sup>109</sup> and there are traces of deficit theory in this important document. If some of Friedman's more telling points<sup>110</sup> were to be considered while looking at the measures advocated by Plowden it seems highly probable that a guiding absolute perspective would be identified.

While the Plowden-inspired educational priority areas were being established the Schools Council was conducting a survey amongst secondary school head teachers in over thirty local education authorities to find out about their early leaving pupils. The results of the enquiry were published in January, 1970 in the Council's working paper Cross'd with Adversity.<sup>111</sup> The writers of the paper would seem to have been informed by deficit theory and they show the main concern to be that adequate compensatory education should be provided for the large number of secondary school children who 'suffer from severe social deprivation'. The evidence of the head teachers led to the conclusion that 'of all the overt characteristics of socially deprived children appearance is the most obvious'. Many boys and girls were seen to be untidy and badly dressed: school uniform was often 'worn to destruction'...shoes were a

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\* In Volume I certainly, but this is less true in terms of the statistical material of Volume II.

perpetual problem. Other symptoms of deprivation were identified as restricted use of language, backwardness in reading and an inability to fulfil the promise of an I.Q. score. It was seen as important that schools should avoid an institutional image where families were 'hostile', as many were found to be in the inner city areas visited by the Schools Council researchers. The children with whom the report was concerned frequently belonged (in the words of the Report) to 'families demoralised by adverse social conditions' or 'disorganised by a series of misfortunes': the characteristic features of poor living standards were all too often in evidence. The recommendations concerning the curriculum and school organisation were reminiscent of the Newsom Report of seven years earlier<sup>112</sup> - the section on 'Slum Schools' in the latter could well have provided the basis for this Schools Council enquiry - and there was more than a hint of Plowden in what was said about home/school relations and teacher training. To many educators Cross'd with Adversity was a disappointing document and one can recall its effect at the time: few were surprised to read the collated impressions of head teachers of this seamy side of the secondary school population but it seemed such a sterile exercise to apply cultural deprivation as a convenient tag to account for so much that seemed to be wrong in the eyes of the head teachers. An absolute perspective prevailed and an opportunity to look in more detail at home backgrounds and the real educational needs of the pupils surveyed was missed. The Schools Council reported 'there is an urgent need for extensive research into the problems of educating these children...'<sup>113</sup> and in the intervening years the Council certainly has encouraged curriculum development work to benefit the less privileged as well as the less able but there is not a mention in Working Paper No 27 of teachers' subjective impressions of these 'deprived children' - there are, however,

plenty of instructions as to how they might be identified within their classes. This document, like the later and more substantial Schools Council report Deprivation and School Progress,<sup>33</sup> resulted from the study of a too limited canvas; little real notice was taken of the home/cultural background which the 'deprived' and 'difficult' children brought with them to school and so little was learnt of how they found the working environment of the school and the extent of sympathy and support available within the school's official organisation and structure. The deficit system model tends to take the curriculum and pedagogy of a school very much for granted and the writers of the Report have done just this.

The matter-of-fact manner of many volumes concerned with the extent and nature of deprivation may give a feeling of confidence to sincere enquirers as they read the well-documented evidence: they need to know just how things are and if this can be shown with clarity and apparent objectivity there will be less danger of there intruding sentimental ideas about the feelings - perhaps concerning identity and self-image - of individual children to cloud the issue of what is best to do. As Corrigan suggests,<sup>114</sup> if there are effective rule-of-thumb measures it is likely that ordinary people as well as policy-makers will be encouraged to pay less regard to social relations as attempts are made to understand social phenomena, such as deprivation. It would seem that herein lies a danger: if the characteristics of deprived children, as decided upon by reference to an absolute perspective, are confidently quantified and catalogued then the likelihood is that many who are prone to be so influenced, such as teachers in need of reassurance as they struggle to do their work in certain inner city areas, will tend to use such data in an uncritical way and be persuaded of the rightness of the deficit position. Having said this, however, notice clearly has to be taken of attempts to present empirical

data on deprivation though caution is needed on the part of those studying such data to ensure that they recognise it is real live people in authentic social situations that are being described. A longitudinal study of children born during a week in March 1958 resulted in the widely-read report compiled by Davie, Butler and Goldstein, From Birth to Seven (1972),<sup>115</sup> and, in the following year, Wedge and Prosser's continued analysis of the same cohort to the age of eleven.<sup>116</sup> Later in this thesis attention is focused upon the criteria used in these reports and notice is taken of others who have similarly presented empirical data on deprivation, e.g., Holman, Socially Deprived Families in Britain.<sup>117</sup> Such work does provide the reader with the kind of confidence mentioned above and it is difficult at first to see what is written as other than completely neutral in the ideological sense. The problem is that concepts of poverty and deprivation tend to be used in an impersonal way in such factual accounts to the extent that it becomes difficult to appreciate that real people occupy the categories being used and actually live in the conditions described. Authors who settle upon firm categories and present data in rigid fashion, who are not particularly concerned with the social reality of people or groups, are likely to be working under the influence of deficit theory.

In this attempt to underline the nature of deficit theory by making reference to selected writings on deprivation criticism has inevitably arisen of various factual/objective accounts of deprivation and it has been regretted that the human element can so easily be missed when there is too close adherence to objectivity. Nevertheless, the value of pithy writing about a topic such as poverty must not be discounted. The emotions of the reader can too easily be carried along when completely free rein is given to stories of human misery: there can be little doubt, for example, that the crisp, factual articles which appear in the journal of



the Child Poverty Action Group, Poverty, are of immense help to that cause - picked up as they frequently are for attention in newspapers and other journals, re-presented as they may often be with humane embellishment.

It has been more than hinted at above that work which attempts objective measurement of absolute criteria for deprivation will in all probability be informed by deficit theory and there is a suggestion that much of the work of the National Children's Bureau in this field can be thus described. The writings of Kellmer Pringle, so closely associated with that body, may generally be so categorised but one recent article of hers is here selected to illustrate how writing on deprivation within the framework of deficit theory, after noticing all the above qualifications, can be of utmost importance. The article chosen is 'Children who are "vulnerable" or "at risk"'.<sup>118</sup> In it children are clearly separated from adults\* - and it is interesting to note in this respect how the perspective of Kellmer Pringle differs from that used by John Holt,<sup>119</sup> whose Escape from Childhood is considered elsewhere in this thesis - and they are shown to be in all kinds of danger from various incompetent, inadequate and even cruel adults. News stories of tragedies which have occurred to young children in the hands of such people - the case of Maria Colwell was particularly shocking - illustrate how proper concern must be given to what Kellmer Pringle is saying but in taking account of such hazards there is a possibility that the boundaries between savagery, malpractice of various kinds in child-rearing and genuine cultural difference may become blurred.<sup>120</sup> There ought not to be any possibility of confusion but in a society such

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\* It is acknowledged that the NCB is bound to distinguish children from adults in order to carry out its work: the objection here is that the children seen to be "at risk" come across as objects rather than as young people living in family situations - however unsatisfactory the latter may seem to be.

as our own in which absolute standards can seldom be identified there may well be a danger that the evil, the misguided and the culturally different may be lumped together by well-meaning guardians of child welfare. In this country (and no doubt others too) people guided by the highest principles seek to put things right when horrifying cases of child abuse appear, but it is not always clear precisely what has to be done. After the Maria Colwell case and subsequent equally distressing events it seems inconceivable that anyone could be against providing more protection for battered children: yet Holman has in fact consistently opposed further measures since the broadening of the Children Bill in 1973 to try and close some of the loopholes exposed by the Colwell case. Holman is anxious to draw attention to the rights of natural parents (Maria was killed by her stepfather after being removed from foster-parents and returned to her natural mother). Holman sees genetic endowment and early childhood experiences as having a major effect upon personality traits and behaviour patterns and feels natural parents should be closely involved in a child's upbringing - with support from the social services if they are proved to be inadequate. He sets out his case forcefully in Inequality in Child Care:<sup>121</sup> although he does not say that children should never be removed from their parents he claims that the Children Act was a mistake because it develops agencies to take children away but does not deal with the social deprivation of families. Although this paragraph deals with material that is essentially sociological in nature, the introduction of Holman's thoughts about this very real dilemma which faces society a social policy/social administration emphasis becomes apparent. Nevertheless, the search for an absolute perspective is seen to continue and the deficit system still has application.

Without doubt it is easy to over-simplify and therefore misrepresent the opinions of authors who work within the terms of the deficit system

model and a further cautionary note is offered to conclude this section:

The argument which presents the deficit view as directing "attention away from the internal organization and the educational context of the school, and focus[ing] our attention on the families and children", really presents a false dichotomy. The two positions (i.e., the deficit position and the difference position) are not mutually exclusive...Deutsch wants also to correct the assumption that holders of a deficit model imply a condemnation of the people who live in depressed areas. "Rather," he asserts, "the identification of such deficits constitutes a condemnation of economic exploitation, injustice and the absence of available exits from the poverty cycle." Finally he points out the danger of viewing the culture of the depressed areas as desirable as against that of more advantaged areas leading to "a respect for slum life so extensive that efforts to eradicate slums and to help their inhabitants to move to other, more advantageous environments would be halted".<sup>122</sup>

(The parentheses have been inserted by the writer (a) to link the quoted passage with other parts of the text, and (b) to smooth out a difficult grammatical construction brought about by the quote (Bernstein) within a quote (Robinson).)

Clearly these cautions need to be kept in mind but more importantly one has to be aware of the dangers of the <sup>un-</sup>questioning acceptance of an absolute perspective which sets up the criteria for deficit systems.

(ii) The simple cultural pluralism model

It needs to be remembered that the root of Watson's typologies<sup>87</sup> lies in the extent to which an overriding normative order may be identified within the society under examination and the degree of consensus to be observed: Horton's paper 'Order and conflict theories of social problems as competing ideologies',<sup>123</sup> provides a useful basis for Watson's theoretical constructs.

Out of the discussion on order emerges the deficit system model, shown in the previous section of this chapter to accommodate a specific view of deprivation. It has been shown how, in an ordered society there is a value consensus which causes those seen as deprived to be given a poorly-socialised and even a deviant identity: the 'worthy' will lose their deprived state through hard work and righteous living.

The cultural pluralism model might seem most appropriate to a modern complex society in which a variety of cultural norms, values and experiences can be observed but the simple cultural pluralism model offered by Watson is shown to have many variants 'ranging from Oscar Lewis's "culture of poverty" model through to Thorstein Sellin's "culture conflict" notions'.<sup>124</sup>

The writer has reservations about Watson's presentation of the simple cultural pluralism model which, at base, might simply be seen as registering differences between cultures rather than attempting to order them. However, the complexities he introduces form a useful basis for discussion and it is proposed to examine them as this section is developed.

Watson sees the basic assumptions of the simple cultural pluralism model as being related in some respects to the theoretical model underlying the deficit system concept and finds that both stem from Horton's order theories; even so, he finds the differences between the models to be crucial.

The simple cultural pluralism model involves the assertion that the notion of cultural deprivation of subordinate group children is an oversimplification. The proponents of this view insist that the experience of living in a subordinate group is a basic influence on, and in turn is influenced by, the "cultural milieu" of the group and may differ in many respects, both morally and cognitively, from the dominant, high-prestige culture of high-status groups in the society - i.e., the middle and upper classes.<sup>125</sup>

(\* presumably simple cultural pluralism)

In spite of Watson's claim that there are many variants of the simple cultural pluralism model (see above) this last statement of his would seem to limit the scope of the model, indeed his use of Lewis's culture of poverty appears to limit unduly the wider concept of cultural pluralism. Strong arguments can be brought against the culture of poverty which do not apply to the more general concept of cultural pluralism. A simple view of the culture of poverty is that financial hardship, squalid

environment and inadequate family support produce a pattern of pathology in which certain responses - apathy, alienation, fatalism and pessimism about the future - become common features and transcend boundaries, whether racial, national, regional or social. In other words, the poor, wherever they live, become habituated to poverty and resistant to change no matter how it is advanced.<sup>126</sup> The culture of poverty can be criticised, however, on the one hand in that poverty, per se, can be seen as a situational condition<sup>127</sup> - brought about by low income, poor housing and inadequate employment opportunities - and capable, therefore, of being remedied by political and economic as well as social measures (and, anyway, the culture of the poor might be respected without attributing pathology to it - e.g., apathy could be replaced by stoicism). On the other hand it can be argued, along with Valentine,<sup>128</sup> that there exist forms of bi-culturalism whereby there is a simultaneous commitment of people within a disadvantaged community to two cultures - that of the dominant group, which demands a degree of conformity to its norms for the satisfaction of such fundamental needs as employment, and that of the community being considered. Cultural pluralism, it is contended, has a great deal more to offer than is indicated by Watson and one would want to agree with Robinson's objection<sup>129</sup> when he observes how Watson includes cultural pluralism models under order theories.<sup>130</sup> The culture of poverty approach can certainly be used to argue that the poor and deprived of a distressed community have become habituated to their lowly status and thus made pathologically incapable of 'bettering' themselves according to the norms of the dominant culture: this argument well fits the requirement of order theorists for a lower rung within a well-ordered society and thus closely aligns the culture of poverty approach with the deficit system conception. Although he acknowledges that the cultural pluralism model has many variants

Watson does not in fact move far from the simple yet, it seems, specific form which merges so easily with the deficit system model.

A positive use of the concept of cultural pluralism is offered by Williams<sup>131</sup> as he sums up the distinguished contributions to a wide-ranging discussion on language and poverty and suggests that a culturally pluralistic approach is essential for the successful teaching of language in schools serving ghetto areas of American cities. It needs to be remembered though that at one point in his reflections upon the material presented in this volume Williams wonders whether, in the final analysis, mono-culturalism might be the price societies will have to pay for maximum technological advancement. Concerning schooling in Britain the author makes positive mention of the concept of cultural pluralism in the conclusion to his article on compensatory education:<sup>132</sup>

Staunch support has been given to...the difference position, which allows meaningful cultural pluralism, as against the deficit position with all its implications for elitism.

While it is not proposed to separate out deficit and difference theories as was done in the article just mentioned, it is worth noticing that although cultural pluralism can be approached from the standpoint of deficit theory - using the concepts introduced by Horton into his order theories<sup>130</sup> - a difference view is more likely to disclose the true strength of the cultural pluralism model. Valentine's 'bi-culturism' has its appeal. It allows different cultures (and sub-cultures) to be kept in proper focus. Williams leads discussion sensibly from this point.

Anthropologists have done much in recent decades to help dispel wrong-headed views in industrially-developed societies about cultures previously described as 'primitive' and the article of Dumont and Wax, 'Cherokee school society and the intercultural classroom',<sup>133</sup> is a particularly good illustration of how such work can help along the notion

of cultural pluralism within the education system of a 'developed' society. The following words from their first paragraph show Dumont and Wax's starting position - indicating clearly that they see education normally operating within the deficit system model:

Notoriously, "education" is an ambiguous word used to justify, idealize, or to criticize a variety of relationships. In the context where the pupils are members of a lower caste or ethnically subordinated group, education has come to denominate a unidirectional process by which missionaries - or others impelled by motives of duty, reform, charity, and self-sacrifice - attempt to uplift and civilize the disadvantaged and barbarian. Education then is a process imposed upon a target population in order to shape and stamp them into becoming dutiful citizens, responsible employees, or good Christians.<sup>134</sup>

Dumont and Wax proceed to show how, although in the eyes of many white educators, Cherokee Indian children have shown themselves to be model pupils - 'sitting with perfect posture, absorbed in their readers, rarely talking...' - they are in fact poorly educated and this is primarily because white teachers have little understanding of the culture of the Cherokee Indians. At a practical level they wonder whether very much can be done even with the consolidation of the rural schools (in the area of Oklahoma studied) into larger, better-staffed and better-equipped establishments unless the teachers are able to appreciate the ethos of the Tribal Cherokee and take advantage of the many opportunities which in fact exist to help these children educationally.

Baratz and Baratz (1970)<sup>135</sup> have given an example of how progress may be made towards cultural pluralism in the field of education. They present a cultural-difference model which takes account of language differences\* between American Negro cultural groups and the middle-class culture - the model can be extended to other ethnic and minority groups.

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\* Recent advances in the study of non-standard English and various patois forms are important but do not provide a complete answer to deficit theorists.

It is argued that the schools, instead of attempting massive intervention procedures with culturally different children, 'must eliminate their archaic and inappropriate procedures for dealing with cultural differences'.<sup>136</sup> It is claimed that intervention programmes have failed because they are based on non-existent deficits, black dialect is not seen as a defective linguistic and conceptual system, as it is by many interventionists, but a structurally coherent although different system. It is, in fact, seen as having all the components of an adequate grammar. Baratz and Baratz are anxious that education should not destroy for these children the experience and cultural forms with which they are familiar. Methods and procedures should be culturally relevant as new materials are taught. Thus it is in the child's own dialect that instruction is begun and there is a gradual extension to standard English and mainstream culture. The work of Labov reported in 'The logic of non-standard English',<sup>137</sup> lends weight to the scheme of Baratz and Baratz: he too attacks the fallacy of verbal deprivation theories and has been able to demonstrate that speakers of non-standard Negro English do adhere to a system of grammar and pattern of logic which equals any used by speakers of standard English.

The simple cultural pluralism model, it has been claimed by Watson,<sup>125</sup> finds 'the notion of cultural deprivation of subordinate group children is an oversimplification' but recognises that such groups differ, both morally and cognitively, from high-status groups. It has been pointed out above that Watson makes this model appear almost complementary to the deficit system model: while recognising subordinate cultures to be genuinely different from the dominant culture they must nevertheless occupy a lower level in the social structure. Clearly this places such a minority culture at a disadvantage but it does at least acknowledge that minority group children arrive at school in possession of some kind



of cultural background and thus lessens the impact of the term 'cultural deprivation', used so freely by deficit theorists. In her examination of the 'myth of cultural deprivation',<sup>138</sup> Keddie usefully asks

...of what culture these families and their children can be deprived, since no group can be deprived of its own culture. It appears therefore that the term becomes a euphemism for saying that working-class and ethnic groups have cultures which are at least dissonant with, if not inferior to, the 'mainstream' culture of the society at large. Culturally deprived children, then, come from homes where mainstream values do not prevail and are therefore less 'educable' than other children. The argument is that the schools' function is to transmit the mainstream values of the society and the failure of children to acquire these values lies in their lack of educability. Thus their failure in school is located in the home, in the pre-school environment, and not within the nature and social organization of the school which "processes" the children into achievement rates.<sup>139</sup>

and it becomes clear from her introduction and the contributions of her collaborative authors that attention has to be turned to what counts as the curriculum, ability and success in school if progress is to be made towards meaningful cultural pluralism.

Keddie's work, in particular her previous article 'Classroom knowledge',<sup>140</sup> induces questions such as 'How do schools prepare children seen as being culturally deprived for life in society where attitudes of the dominant culture prevail?'. That many educators assume there can be but one normative order soon becomes apparent when teachers discuss the curriculum and teaching methods. The writer commented upon such circumstances in his article on compensatory education as follows:

At such times there is a danger of educators taking an elitist stance. One example is the way in which some have interpreted Midwinter's specifications for a socially relevant curriculum (1972: 12) as offering low-grade material for low-status groups - they are prepared to go along with the idea but not the positive reasoning which underlies it. Also based on the worthiness of things to be taught, Keddie's research (1971) demonstrates differently the way in which a kind of diluted knowledge is offered to lower category pupils at school - for example,

how the residual human element is often seen as the only part of an historical event/movement suitable for lower forms. The suggestion is that to get on the educational success ladder low-status pupils have to discover quickly and accept what teachers count as being worthwhile knowledge.<sup>141</sup>

It has been reported above how Dumont and Wax wondered whether '...large, better-staffed and better equipped schools...' could help the children they were investigating unless the teachers were able to appreciate the ethos of the Tribal Cherokee - this was a clear case, it seemed, of cultural difference getting in the way of education. Pratt and Travers<sup>142</sup> have carried out research in East London in recent years and report that, however much teachers might concern themselves with learning of cultural differences within the catchment areas of their schools, the provision made by local education authorities - particularly in the allocation of resources for various projects - may not allow them to service the educational needs seen to exist. It is an interesting and useful exercise which they have carried out with careful objectivity: they conclude that education authorities need to take steps to monitor the consequences of their own provision.

We have shown that provision is not neutral; it has profound social consequences.

The work of Pratt and Travers provides a reminder that, however important it is that teachers should appreciate the cultural differences which exist among their pupils, local authorities have a very real responsibility to make adequate provision, taking into account socio-cultural patterns within their areas. And LEA responsibility does not end with the allocation of funds. The following quotation from Robinson<sup>143</sup> highlights this reservation being made about cultural difference at a more general level:

There is a tendency within Keddle's position to be over romantic about the lot of the deprived. She agrees with Wax and Wax that it is dangerous to assume that those who lack material benefits are necessarily deficient in their culture. This may well be true, but from this position it is easy to argue that there is little point in ending the degradation and squalor to which we commit the poor.

The simple cultural pluralism model carries the assertion that the notion of cultural deprivation is an over-simplification. Cultural differences between groups in a complex society may take many forms and in this section of comment upon the simple cultural pluralism model the degree to which cultural difference can be equated with cultural pluralism has come into question. Cicirelli<sup>136</sup> has insisted that it is cultural difference in conduct norms that lies at the heart of the difficulties experienced by educators whose work is with culturally-mixed school populations and deficit models are unlikely to be helpful to them. It is urged that an unduly narrow use of the simple cultural pluralism model is to be avoided during the examination of existing cultural differences. It would seem that cultural pluralism will exist only when cultural differences are acknowledged as valid and there is no suggestion of stigma being attached to any one cultural group.

(iii) The radical vanguard model

The radical vanguard model of deprivation, developed by Carmichael and Hamilton,<sup>144</sup> seeks to negate the influence of the dominant culture to the extent that minority culture is in the ascendancy. This complete reversal of the deficit system is difficult to conceive as a model for general application in a modern complex society unless one considers the special circumstances under which militant movements have grown up within minority groups in certain societies, the Black Power movement within the United States of America is a major example. The Black Power movement would seem to have had little impact in Britain although certain

politicians<sup>145</sup> have insisted there are sinister possibilities in the increasing political awareness among the young blacks of our urban areas. Sympathisers with ethnic minority groups tell of the dangers of allowing deprivations to continue and occasional outbreaks of violence in inner city districts with large immigrant populations, such as Brixton in London and St Pauls in Bristol, seem to induce more desire at national and local level to introduce reforms<sup>146</sup> likely to ameliorate physical deprivations.

The way in which young blacks of West Indian origin have swelled the numbers of the Rastafarian Sect within Britain has caused the movement to take on a growing importance and it could well be said now to show characteristics of the radical vanguard model. Rastafarians certainly seek to negate the influence of the dominant culture in Britain, as far as members of the sect are concerned, and many young blacks who have been singularly unsuccessful at school and in the job market have, no doubt, gained a greater sense of identity out of their links with the movement, possibly giving them a feeling of ascendancy in spite of their apparent condition of powerlessness. The movement can be seen as providing a religio-cultural base to an extreme political protest faction within the country but it operates on a comparatively small scale and the social-structural differences between Britain and America mentioned above make comparisons with the Black Power movement difficult.

In considering the potential of the radical vanguard model and the vulnerability of ethnic minority group youths to such influences, it is worth noticing examples in the literature of how deprivations of one kind or another cause black minority group children, particularly those of Afro-Caribbean origin, to perform poorly at school but the message which comes through strongly from these authors, for example Coard and Giles,<sup>147</sup>

is that teacher attitudes and expectations are at the root of the problem. It is interesting to look at the 1968 work of the American author, Kozol,<sup>148</sup> for an extreme example of how teachers have been perceived in their attitudes towards black children in their charge. Death at an Early Age is iconoclastic in nature but there is a poignancy about the way the lot of black American children in Boston's schools is described and the enormous disadvantages which continue to be heaped upon them are highlighted, but it is the conceptions and attitudes of teachers and school officials with which Kozol is really concerned, as well as perhaps the naivety of the general public about what is patently going on. The dimensions of race and colour are clearly important to his thesis but it is possible to isolate a more general theme relating to conceptions of deprivation. The radical vanguard model, one suspects, would have appeal to Kozol yet the following passage indicates that, far from seeking to negate the influence of the dominant culture to the extent that minority culture is in the ascendancy, he simply wishes to see Negro pupils accorded humane treatment.

For it is the Boston school teachers themselves who for years have been speaking of the negro children in their charge as "animals" and the school building that houses them as "a zoo". And it is well known how commonly the injustices and depredations of the Boston school system have compelled its Negro pupils to regard themselves with something less than the dignity and respect of human beings.<sup>149</sup>

It is quite a monstrous testimony which Kozol presents as he describes his year as a probationary teacher in Boston's schools and one wonders how far his findings would be seen as legitimate by those teaching in urban schools elsewhere. In fact it seems to be the normalcy which often bothers him and he frequently maligns himself for failing to act against apparent injustices and virtually accuses himself of bad faith for fitting into

the system and condoning the iniquitous treatment handed out to the pupils. Kozol's work undoubtedly reflects something of the climate in ghetto areas of urban America at the time Carmichael and Hamilton were formulating their political philosophy of Black Power.

A revolutionary recommendation which the latter make to remedy the kind of situation observed by Kozol is that the education of blacks should be taken out of the hands of the 'professionals', especially white professionals. Schools for blacks, they assert, ought to be run by blacks and to teach a 'racially relevant' curriculum.

In the search for educational relevance, black today is revolutionary and nationalistic. A black studies program which is not revolutionary and nationalistic is, accordingly, quite profoundly irrelevant. The black revolutionary nationalist, aware and proud of his blackness, demands the right to exist as a distinct category - (the "Uncle Tom" Negro) contrarily, would just as soon be white. He longs to escape his blackness and, in search [of] integration achieves disintegration.<sup>150</sup>

The dimension of race perhaps gives a certain twist to the radical vanguard model but the hyperbole of Watson's quotation highlights an attitude which is certainly not unknown in Britain.<sup>151</sup> Watson looks more deeply into the detail of Black Studies and cites Hare<sup>152</sup> as saying that a true programme of this kind should reverse the 'blacking out of the black perspective', teaching black history from the perspective of traditional dominant group assumptions.

Black Studies courses have been launched in Britain as well, of course, and it is interesting to consider whether the same radical vanguard zeal has been evident in their initiation. The author had a group of black sixth formers from Tulse Hill School<sup>153</sup> come to talk to his teacher-trainee students about their Black Studies course. The sixth formers' very real interest in this curriculum innovation was apparent and they showed some pride in the way they were helping to organise the Black Studies programme

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at their school for both G.C.E. 'O' level and C.S.E. pupils. It is interesting to attempt an analysis of the pride shown by these boys in their involvement in the planning of the Black Studies programme. On the one hand, it has to be remembered that they were, as sixth formers and likely to be gaining 'A' level qualifications, better placed than many of their compatriots as far as job prospects were concerned so it was unlikely that they would be particularly hostile against 'the system' but, on the other hand, they were clearly dedicated to helping their younger schoolmates of a similar background to achieve a stronger sense of identity through Black Studies. These sixth formers had recently appeared on national television to talk about their course and the interviewer had made much of the Black Power (clenched fist) medallion worn by two of them. They refused to be drawn into a discussion of Black Power, however, but simply stressed the importance of helping young blacks of West Indian origin to achieve a sense of black identity. In a subtle way these young men were using the psychological advantages of the radical vanguard approach to minority group members to move towards a form of cultural pluralism in which none need feel inferior because of ethnic origin.

Another point concerning the radical vanguard model mentioned above, that schools for blacks should be run by black teachers, has also been encountered in this country. It is usually made by those who hold to a fairly extreme political position and who are committed to a radical vanguard approach but, in practical terms, this is not an easy problem to resolve. Clearly the Black Power advocates, reported by Watson,<sup>150</sup> are seeking to have their children taught in an atmosphere in which an 'alien' culture does not dominate and we have heard those so persuaded<sup>154</sup> ask why there should be schools, for example, for Jewish children in

Britain yet none for Negro children.<sup>155</sup> Such talk may seem to confuse religious, ethnic and cultural factors but it is the very stuff of the radical vanguard model. Many concerned with education advocate increased recruitment of black teachers to serve in multi-racial schools but this seldom relates in any way to the radical vanguard model: it is usually claimed that black teachers are more likely to have greater success than white teachers in teaching black children and there is some evidence to support this view.<sup>156</sup>

Recruitment of black teacher-trainees in Britain has not been very good and, although there have been signs that the profession has not been found attractive to school leavers of Caribbean origin, a significant factor has been the lack of candidates from this source with the necessary G.C.E. passes.<sup>157</sup> Political capital has been made out of this fact by those attracted to the radical vanguard movement but again, in practical terms, it has been difficult to meet the problem of how to increase recruitment of black teachers. It has been suggested that a lowering of standards for entry to teacher-training could be used to help attract the sought-after recruits but even activists in this politically sensitive area give little support to the lowering of entry standards. They tend to look back to the school system and say more black secondary school children should qualify to become teachers.<sup>158</sup> A useful device which has been introduced recently is the 'link' or 'access' course and one is run by the author's college in conjunction with a local technical college.<sup>159</sup> A dozen students who show a suitability for teaching, youth and community or other social work but who do not possess the required academic qualifications follow a one-year concentrated course in order to achieve the necessary competence and skills in the basic subjects and they are inducted into a specialism which is to form the basis of their



advanced study when they join a higher education course. These students are all of Caribbean or West African origin and, like the black sixth-formers mentioned above, they seem dedicated to the task of helping with the education and welfare of children from similar ethnic backgrounds within what must often seem a hostile cultural setting.

It is proposed that the radical vanguard model, although it may seem at first sight to provide a framework for revolutionary thinking, can through engendering confidence in group identity help towards realistic cultural pluralism. The above examples from the literature and from the author's personal experience are concerned with ethnic minority groups and probably more attention should have been given to the racial component, but general principles can be deduced and applied to various indigenous cultural and sub-cultural settings, for example those described by Klein, Hoggart, Frankenberg and others,<sup>160</sup> to help offset the cultural disadvantages experienced by the children from such groups<sup>161</sup> within the school system. Such thinking may seem to provide a forlorn hope for those living in the 'deprived' estate which provides the study area of this research project: here the deficit system model would seem to dominate and to talk of negating the influence of the dominant culture to the extent that minority culture gains ascendancy would seem to stretch credulity to the limit; nevertheless, the messages passed in the above are worth bearing in mind as the testimonies of witnesses are examined in a later chapter, particularly in the few instances where mention is made of pride in communal effort.

(iv) The alternative competences model

The final model listed by Watson, that of alternative competences, is interesting in that it gives added credence to difference theorists.

Keddie, in the much-quoted introduction to her reader on cultural deprivation,<sup>162</sup> insists that the failure in school of children from other than 'mainstream' culture

...is located in the home, in the pre-school environment, and not within the nature and social organization of the school which "processes" the children into achievement rates.

After introducing the contribution of Labov to her reader she goes on to ask 'why it is that with the children before their eyes teachers and researchers have failed to see what kids from poor homes are capable of'.<sup>163</sup>

The Newsons<sup>164</sup> have pointed to the lack of psychological stress found among the children of the poor homes in Nottingham studied by them as compared with the neuroses frequently suffered by young people being implored to succeed at school by professional or business parents.

Other writers have made much of the sharpness and the keen survival skills possessed by inner city children, so often seen as deprived, but few have attempted to demonstrate the strengths of the inner city child in the manner of Eisenberg.<sup>165</sup>

The key issue in looking at the strengths of the inner city child is the importance of not confusing difference with defect. Any teacher who has taught a grade in the middle-class section and a grade in the lower-class section of the city can certainly testify to the difference. Inner city children's clothes, their accents, their activity level, their classroom behaviour, their type of verbalization, their health standards, all do differ. Depending on the type of test you use, they do test defective - notice that I said "depending on the type of test".

If we look at what we are and what they are as an anthropologist might, and total up the assets and the liabilities in the patterns of each group, then we find that all of the virtues are not on our middle-class side.

Some writers who adopt this theme seem to do so in a negative way, offering little real help to the disadvantaged children being discussed:

Postman's witty article 'The politics of reading'<sup>166</sup> can be so viewed.

He uses satire to challenge teachers' conceptions of how things are in the teaching of reading to deprived children, in fact he suggests that little real enterprise is shown in helping those from unsupportive homes to learn to read. Rather the ritual of unimaginative reading lessons is adhered to almost as if to spite their lack of preparedness from home.

Everyone's going to learn to read, even if we have to kill them to do it.

...the schools are still the principal source of the idea that literacy is equated with intelligence. Why, the schools even promote the idea that spelling is related to intelligence! Of course, if any of this were true, reading teachers would be the smartest people around. One doesn't mean to be unkind, but if that indeed is the case, no one has noticed it. In any event, it is an outrage that children who do not read well, or at all, are treated as if they are stupid.<sup>167</sup>

Postman has written elsewhere in a similar vein, though usually putting his message more directly: his work with Weingartner, Teaching as a Subversive Activity,<sup>168</sup> commanded considerable attention from those who felt dissatisfied with educational provision for less privileged children, so often seen as having little potential, and sought realistic change.

At present, the conventional school is a hostile place, especially to urban "disadvantaged" children. They do not learn what the school says it "teaches", and they drop out - or are thrown out - of it as soon as they reach the age where this is legally possible. These "failures" do not disappear. They remain in the community, and they comprise an endless and growing population dedicated to "getting even" with the society that has reviled and rejected them in school.

Firm advice then follows with

It is possible to view the "school" in the city, particularly in "disadvantaged" areas, more as a process than a structure...

and various very real possibilities for school/community co-operation are expounded.

To see the potential of the alternative competences model when used in the context of the urban school further reference is made to the Eisenberg article, 'Strengths of the inner city child'.<sup>165</sup> Eisenberg suggests these strengths can and should - if properly harnessed - become a factor in improved educational performance among inner city children. He cites how the Harlem Project in the New York City Schools enabled one high school in a three-year period to lift the group I.Q. ten points, to triple the number of graduates, and to double the number who went on to take some further type of education: he ponders that if this can be done in high school 'where the children are certainly in worse shape' then consider what might be done at the elementary stage. The success of the programme stemmed from a saturation of educational services but account was constantly taken of positive help available within communities. Clearly it is necessary to build upon local strengths and the family of the inner city child may well be found to contain a degree of co-operation and mutual aid between its members that extends beyond what is found within the nuclear family typical of the middle class.

It embraces uncles, aunts, grandparents, cousins, and so on. The child has a sense of being part of a large and extended family which becomes as large as the community in which he grows up, and these are people available to him as a resource in times of crisis.<sup>169</sup>

And Eisenberg writes of how it is not uncommon to have a child brought to a Children's Psychiatric Service clinic by someone who is not a blood relative of the child but has taken him in. Granted this point could raise a number of issues about the state of the family in modern Britain and some would wish to doubt the rather cosy image of the extended family in 'deprived' urban areas offered in the above extract from Eisenberg's article yet the author would want to assure readers that something of what is here suggested was discovered in the evidence offered by subjects

in this research project. Perhaps the emphasis is different from that proposed by Willmott and Young in their dated Bethnal Green study,<sup>170</sup> and largely confirmed by Rosser and Harris in their later enquiry in the Swansea area,<sup>171</sup> yet not altogether consonant with the updating efforts of the former researchers,<sup>172</sup> Gavron,<sup>173</sup> Bott<sup>174</sup> and others, but it is not necessary to embark upon a discussion of the family as an institution in order to examine the points made by Eisenberg in his examination of the strengths of children often seen as deprived.

Whatever differences may exist between the children of deprived areas within the United States and those of similar areas in Britain (and clearly one has to be on the look-out for differences which may affect the point of view here presented), Eisenberg is convinced that these children display a feeling for people which may be more extensive and widespread than is found among children from backgrounds more similar to those of entrants to the teaching profession: this derives, he is sure, from the co-operativeness and mutual aid found in 'the lower-class family' and helps make children more individualistic and self-oriented. As a rule there is less sibling rivalry than in middle-class families and there is not the struggle for mother's or father's love. This, in turn, makes these youngsters psychologically less marked by an individualistic competitive orientation, though Eisenberg is not clear whether this should be seen as a deficit or an asset. It does mean, he submits, that teachers have to find other ways of challenging them in the classroom

ways that differ from the ones suitable with the middle-class child who's out to start his bank account of grades and money as soon as possible. [Teachers] need a different approach with the inner city child who doesn't think of himself as setting aside wheat in his granary so that he can eat while others have to struggle.<sup>175</sup>

Hence the teacher needs to recognise an inner city child's tendency to

have collective values, i.e., family and group values, rather than individualistic ones. Parents frequently feel that it is social group forces that will benefit them and individual activity is unlikely to achieve very much: there is often a feeling that the odds are so heavily stacked against you that your success, as an individual, is virtually impossible. Such a feeling may be seen as a crucial factor in the concept of the culture of poverty discussed earlier in this chapter. Yet it is pointed out that collective or group values can have an extremely motivating force and teachers identifying tendencies in this direction would do well to make use of them in the pursuit of better educational provision in areas seen as deprived. Cognisance was given to this by few of the subjects offering evidence in this research project and there was little sign of action being taken along these lines.

It is difficult to disagree with Eisenberg's statement that inner city children and their families are less readily taken in than are those of middle class background by status and prestige and possibly their values are more genuinely equalitarian but in this lies a problem for teachers. A child brought up to believe that teachers are good and should be respected is likely to listen to and believe the teacher, to assume that what the teacher did was for the right kind of motive. Eisenberg finds, however, that the inner city child feels that people are what they are on the basis of what they show and not on the basis of their titles. Thus, it would seem, the teacher of children from deprived backgrounds needs to go to considerable lengths to prove himself in their eyes, discovering the kind of competences that they respect.

'Typically, inner city families are somewhat disorganized'<sup>176</sup> declares Eisenberg and this is certainly the impression created by the subjects who have offered evidence in this research project: however a

positive consequence is educed from this statement as he relates how, because these parents have so much to do, it is not possible to watch over children in the way of caring middle class parents and inner city children are, therefore, free from parental over-protection. Eisenberg continues:

They are more ready to accept responsibility and many begin babysitting at the age of five, six or seven, and keep the baby out of trouble. They'll make mistakes because no seven-year-old ought to have to take care of the baby. But they often show more responsibility for family chores than I see in my child - it's my fault not his.<sup>176</sup>

In saying that these children 'learn to negotiate the jungle of the slums' he is placing a finger upon what must be to many professional people concerned with their welfare the most reprehensible aspect of the alternative competences model. They are unlikely to be impressed by the assertion that 'intellectual art' is involved.

Some the things inner city children have learned are terrible - how to steal candy from the store and so forth. But on the other hand, there is a certain kind of know-how for survival, and this is an intellectual art, not just an exercise in an Oliver Twist environment.<sup>176</sup>

In drawing attention to the concreteness of learning and the lack of flexibility<sup>177</sup> normally found among inner city children Eisenberg is coming to grips with the kind of educational problem faced by many educators involved in the setting up of compensatory education schemes.

Let's not jump to the conclusion that the inner city child is inadequate because, having lacked the early experiences our children have had, he cannot do the things that our children do. The inner city child is responsive, he has learned, but the trouble is that we haven't yet got a curriculum that pegs the things that he has learned so as to start from where he is.<sup>178</sup>

Thus the suggestion is that the inner city child under-performs at school because he seldom finds scope for his talents within the framework of the normal school curriculum. There may be a chance of compromise between

the view expressed when the deficit system model was being discussed earlier in this chapter, that is that little worthwhile in terms of skills and knowledge is brought to school by children from deprived homes, and the optimism of those impressed by the alternative competences model.

Evidence has also been produced to indicate that inner city children show superior physical co-ordination and skills.<sup>179</sup> They have had to learn to survive by doing, it is suggested, rather than by talking;<sup>180</sup> they possess a kind of body language and grace, 'a style that is physical rather than verbal'. The style of inner city children Eisenberg sees as physical and visual and many traits could be listed but he is sure that the issue is not who is better, the inner city child or the suburban middle class child, but that teachers should recognise the differences existing between them. They understand the relationship of the latter's behaviour to his or her environment but a greater respect will grow for the former from a study of the dynamics of inner city behaviour.

The concept of alternative competences clearly is worth the attention of teachers and others involved in the welfare of those labelled as deprived; but the paucity of literature dealing with the concept is to be regretted. Watson<sup>181</sup> finds that the model

at first sight appears to bear a surface resemblance to certain aspects of both the simple cultural pluralist and the radical vanguard models of minority group cultures

but goes on to say

However, while each of these former models is largely rooted in a conception (implicit or explicit) of macro-structural aspects of society - i.e., with a conception of the massive institutional arrangements of society as a whole, the alternative competences model exemplifies a micro-level approach - i.e., it seeks to examine, in great analytical detail, locatable features of, say, minority or subordinate group life, and sometimes to relate this in specific terms to the educational performance of minority or subordinate group members in school.



This seems of considerable importance when one is pondering, for example, the way in which children from a particular locale, such as the housing estate of this research project, are perceived by those responsible for their education and welfare. Eisenberg's advice, quoted above,<sup>165</sup> that we might learn from the anthropologist in this regard makes very good sense, as does the recent move towards ethnography in school-based research.<sup>182</sup>

A teacher will still need to work towards sound educational goals but it is possible that an appreciation of alternative competences will lead him or her to a fuller understanding of children previously seen as unsatisfactory in most aspects of school life. To win over such children, however, it will be necessary to heed Bernstein's words (from O.U. Course E202, Unit 25):

...if the culture of the teacher is to become part of the consciousness of the child, then the culture of the child must first be in the consciousness of the teacher.

(v) Other models of deprivation

Clearly the four models proposed by Watson are not the only ones available to the student intent upon examining the underlying theory of deprivation, but it is considered that these particular models provide a useful indication of ideological positions evident in the literature.

In his article 'Educational models for the disadvantaged', Cicirelli<sup>183</sup> summarises a range of possible models available to students concerned with the performance of pupils seen as deprived but, as was the case with some of the texts discussed earlier in this chapter, this work has largely ignored the ideological implications of the material under consideration. Cicirelli points to the greater awareness and concern for the urban poor of the United States during the 1960s<sup>184</sup> - especially in the education of their children - and identifies three

broad viewpoints about the cause of the achievement gap evident in urban schools and ways in which it might be eliminated. He labels three groups of models as follows:

The deficit models assert that something is wrong with the children of the poor; they are intellectually retarded or limited in some way and hence cannot attain middle-class levels of achievement without appropriate remedial or preventive intervention programmes. The school-disparity models assert that something is wrong with the schools; the children of the poor are different from middle-class children but not inferior, and the schools must change their present ineffective approaches in order to use these children's talents for achievement while simultaneously maintaining their sub-cultural identities. The de-actualization models assert that something is wrong with society; society has a false conception of human nature, and the so-called achievement gap between middle-class and poor children is really a pseudo-problem. Each child is a unique individual whose goals for achievement should be determined by his own needs and interests rather than by the imposition of external goals and standards...\* the disadvantaged child is restricted in the self-actualization of his potential and needs developmental programmes allowing him the freedom to release his potential and develop to the fullest.<sup>185</sup>

At first sight it might be assumed that Cicirelli has gone some way towards summarising the Watson models examined above but although his first two groups, in particular, do reflect something of the latter it will be found on closer examination that there are considerable differences in approach. Cicirelli demonstrates the pragmatic style of educational psychology as he breaks down each group of models in the following way:

#### Deficit models

He sees diagnosis and prescription as important for remedial intervention programmes and finds that a theory of mental development is important to guide selection of appropriate experiences for preventive intervention programmes. He distinguishes three deficit models, namely the environmental-deficit model, the nutritional-deficit model, and the genetic-deficit model.

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\* It can be asked (Cosin, 1982) whether need is not distinguished from want precisely by external goals and standards. De-actualisation models do seem to cushion the child from both societal and group influences.

### School-disparity models

These vary, he finds, in their conceptions of just how the urban child differs from the middle-class child and also how the school is at fault. He locates four models in this category: the cultural-difference model, the culture-of-poverty model, the bi-cultural model, and the institutional-prejudice model. Not surprisingly, there is more of a sociological flavour to this section, though little heed is taken of ideology.

### De-actualization models

Cicirelli does not attempt to separate out de-actualization models. He stresses that such models all have a humanistic underpinning and mentions, as an example, the traditional nursery school with its individualized instruction, discovery learning and use of intrinsic motivation: he sees Piagetian theory, today's youth movement, certain neo-Freudians and the humanist-existentialist viewpoint toward human nature and development all contributing to de-actualization models.<sup>186</sup>

Enjoining that the seventies must be a decade of improvement in the education of the urban poor, Cicirelli (1972) writes:

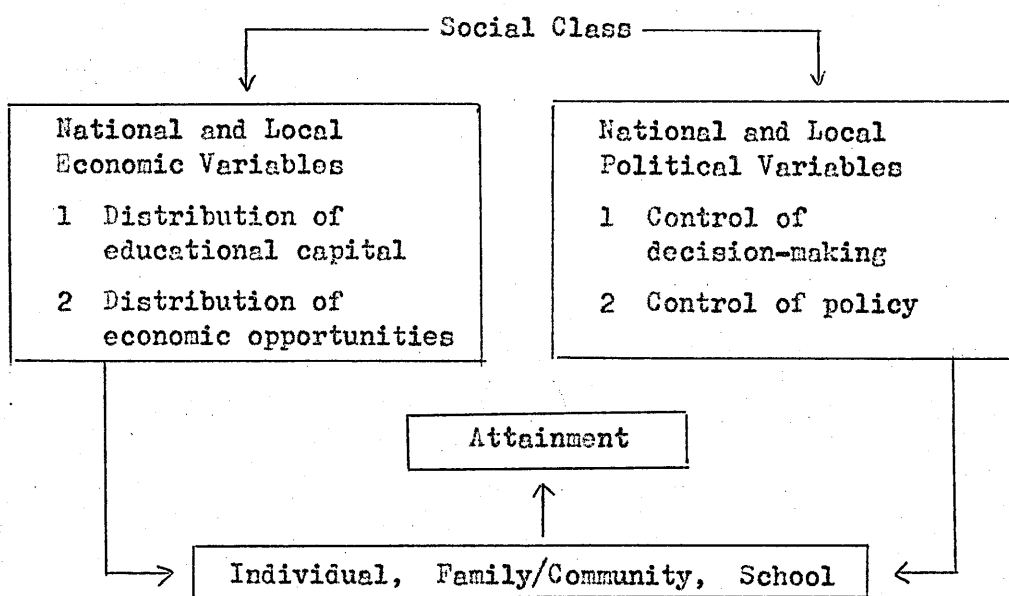
The schools themselves can do the job, and they should attempt it. Even if schools have been doing a questionable job in the past, they should not be eliminated in favour of other institutions or reduced in significance, as some would have us believe (Holt, 1965; Illich, 1971). On the contrary, with some measure of relief from the enrollment pressures and scarcity of qualified teachers which characterized the sixties, this is the ideal time to concentrate on quality education for all.<sup>187</sup>

This is an interesting concluding paragraph to an article in which six approaches, stemming from the above models, have been presented without a suggestion that politics might play some part in the processes under examination.

In his consideration of 'typologies of deprivation', Robinson<sup>188</sup> notes the way in which Flude<sup>189</sup> also examines deficit theories, competence theories, difference and school inadequacy theories, as well as resource theories. In the discussion so far notice has been taken of all but the last of these theories, although they have not necessarily been dealt with under precisely the same headings; before an attempt is

made to sum up what has been offered in this chapter some comment must be made on resource theories.

Such theories clearly relate to a statement earlier in this chapter to the effect that poverty can be seen as a situational condition and therefore capable of being remedied by political and economic, as well as social, measures. Embling<sup>190</sup> has noted that local education authorities incur 84.3 per cent of all educational expenditure and that control rests primarily with the local authority itself. Certainly there are governmental constraints, particularly noticeable in the current economic climate, which relate to the sum of money available to any one L.E.A. and to the way in which this money may be spent but, even so, Embling's fact stands and there is considerable variation between local authorities as well as between the different parts of the educational service within authorities as far as the availability of resources is concerned. Byrne and Williamson<sup>191</sup> have analysed the expenditure patterns found in a large sample of L.E.As and have come to the conclusion that the policies pursued by a local authority are of the greatest importance and resource distribution is clearly a key factor in deciding the quality of education likely to be available to the young people of any one area. Copied below is a diagram which illustrates a model developed from the work of Boaden,<sup>192</sup> Eggleston,<sup>193</sup> Byrne and Williamson<sup>191</sup> and others.



### THE ATTAINMENT - RESOURCES PARADIGM<sup>194</sup>

This provides a sharp reminder of the way in which political and economic variables intrude when the education and life-chances of children seen as deprived are being considered. The model contrasts with the class-culture paradigm,<sup>195</sup> favoured by deficit theorists, which places the burden of educational attainment upon

- (a) the motivation, values and capacity of the individual
- (b) the type, size and stability of the family, its cultural values and social class membership; and
- (c) the type, organization and curriculum of the school - its resources being seen as unproblematic and clearly suitable for the type and status of the school being considered.

The retention of 'social class' in the attainment-resources paradigm means that linkages between the two models can still be made but an opportunity now exists to move discussion away from incessant criticism of the cultural norms followed by a large number of families represented in schools serving areas labelled as deprived and to challenge certain L.E.As to take positive political and economic action in the light of shortcomings revealed by the work of Byrne, Williamson, *et al.*\*

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\* The Moynihan policy of benign neglect - possibly accompanied by... police repression - it has been suggested (Cosin, 1982) might enable authorities to avoid accusations of 'cultural harassment'.

Without looking at the close detail of resource allocation within particular parts of the education service there is a danger of becoming involved in unconvincing generalisation: this is often the case when politicians are making their points, both nationally and locally.

Through the use of cluster analysis techniques though Byrne, Fletcher and Williamson<sup>196</sup> have managed to present detailed data to differentiate among L.E.As in terms of the resource policy the authorities pursue, the educational provision they make and the attainment patterns of children resident in the area. Out of their analyses five types of L.E.As have emerged in England and Wales and a similar analysis of data relating to Scotland has produced two clusters of Scottish L.E.As, allowing useful comparisons to be made both between L.E.As and between the two education systems. Their analysis suggests that there does exist 'a socio-spatial system of differential access to educationally mediated life chances'.<sup>197</sup>

The resource model has its attractions but clearly there are limits to what even the massive shifting of resources into education can achieve.<sup>198</sup> In his conclusion to The Sociology of Educational Equality Tyler writes '...the economic dimensions were proposed as being real and tractable for immediate action',<sup>199</sup> but his study has led him to believe that even revolutionary changes in the distribution of wealth and income will not spell the end of the profoundly inegalitarian tendencies of individual learning and attainment. Nevertheless, support has to be given to better resource provision by education authorities serving areas seen as deprived but if the cultural dimensions of educational inequality are not borne in mind maximum benefit is unlikely to be achieved.

Runciman<sup>200</sup> has concerned himself more generally with identifying the most socially just principles by which resources can be allocated in a society. He attempts to do this by applying to the notion of relative

deprivation the contractual model of justice, as it has been modified and developed by Rawls.<sup>201</sup>

The principle of allocation appealed to in the name of justice is one which should be acceptable to any reasonable man "in a state of primordial equality" before he knows whether or not he will be a loser or a gainer. It is recognized that all inequalities need to be justified, and the criteria of justification are those of need, merit and the common good. The criterion of need which is related to inequalities of class takes precedence over the other two, because "the right to claim more than subsistence if [we] should turn out to be at the bottom will outweigh the right to keep more of what [we] earn if [we] turn out to be at the top". Thus, inequalities will be accepted if they are of a kind and for reasons which we would have agreed as being just "under the conditions of hypothetical contract".

It is wondered, however, whether sufficient account has been taken of the 'cultural dimensions' of inequality (see Tyler, above) as Runciman reasons on this canvas of philosophy. To say that 'the test of inequalities is whether they can be justified to the losers; and for the winners to be able to do this, they must be prepared, in principle, to change places'<sup>202</sup> is to give an unreal ring to the situations observed as evidence has been collected in this research project yet consideration will have to be given to Runciman's thinking when conclusions come to be sought. A second aspect of Runciman's work will also be worth considering at this time and that is his distinction between praise and respect when referring to inequalities of status. Tyler summarises thus:<sup>203</sup>

...as Runciman (1967) points out, while all men are entitled to respect, they are not all entitled to praise. To ignore or override differences in competence or ability is to endanger the equality of institutional life and ultimately perhaps to commit another injustice.

It is not proposed to consider further the contribution that philosophy has to make towards a fuller understanding of the concept of deprivation but the points made indicate useful areas for reflection at the end of this study.

(vi) The influence of theoretical models on this research project

The above discussion of theoretical models which have been used in the study of deprivation reminds that:

Ideological issues have always been inextricably intertwined with attempts to deal with deprivation and poverty...<sup>204</sup>.

The author must give some indication of his own position as far as theory underlying the concept of deprivation is concerned before narrowing the discussion and presenting hypotheses to be used in the examination of data collected during the field-work phase of this research project. The methodology used in the collection of these data is reported upon in Chapter 2, when issues of theory again arise - for example, it will be found that the research procedure adopted is relatively unstructured with the methods associated with the interpretive paradigm<sup>205</sup> very much in evidence.

It has already been indicated in this chapter - see 4(d)(ii) above - that in earlier consideration of theory underpinning the concept of deprivation the author was inclined to polarise two theoretical groupings identifying, on the one hand, deficit theories and, on the other, difference theories. Little common ground was located between the two groupings and scant attention was paid to Robinson<sup>206</sup> who argued 'towards a position which says that difference and deficit theories can be complementary and that an uncritical adoption of either is naive'. It was proposed that for the purpose of explaining educational disadvantage there have developed two principal models:

1. The deficit model - based on the belief that many children do not or cannot for a variety of reasons, which include environmental, cultural and personal (possibly genetic) defects, take proper advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.



2. The difference model, sometimes refined to "the school inadequacy model", which holds that the child from a less privileged background should not be considered inferior to the pupil from a supportive middle-class home though his cultural affiliations, language and behaviour patterns may be very different.

There are a number of indications as to why these two models have come to be constructed in the above discussion of selections from the literature on deprivation. They do lend themselves to the identification of opposing political views on the education of 'deprived' children and provide a convenient framework for the kind of discussion initiated by the author in his article on compensatory education.<sup>207</sup> Even so, a deeper study of the application of the concept of deprivation to education reveals that, however convenient the models may be as tags for ideological positions, there is substance in Robinson's caution<sup>206</sup> about their uncritical adoption.

Clearly 'culture' must lie at the heart of any consideration of the concept of deprivation and it is important that the meaning one intends to impute to the word should be made clear before it comes to be used freely in discussions on collected data. The author wrote earlier:<sup>82</sup>

It seems useful to quote Tylor's definition of culture: he sees it as "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and other capabilities required by man as a member of society". In no sense is high culture implied and capabilities will vary according to group membership in a modern complex society. Attributes have to be learned in the course of associating with others. When considered in this light, one is only socially deprived because one has not enjoyed the right company: cultural deprivation becomes an extremely odd idea.

Whether or not this piece, following as it did a discussion of Keddie's oft-quoted question 'of what culture these families and their children can be deprived, since no group can be deprived of its own culture',<sup>208</sup> was successful in making a distinction between 'high culture' and the

more anthropological use of the term for the purposes of this work culture can be defined heuristically as 'deriving from the interpretations of common problems by participants in a situation'.<sup>209</sup> Such a definition embraces the way in which culture may be seen as the response of a group as it comes to terms with its situation: cultural norms will tend to give a certain permanence to this response but the author would want to be wary of placing too much emphasis upon this tendency and would rather think of the group member as being confronted by his own cultural arrangements which become taken-for-granted constraints upon his actions.

To make sense of his everyday world and his place within it an individual clearly needs to construct a framework of meanings but no one can be sure of the extent to which the individual has freedom in the construction of this framework. The sociological approach which sees man as a meaning-maker, or an active constructor of reality, has appeal but there has to be a constant awareness of the social nature of man and of the fact that others, both inside and outside the individual's own group, have a considerable influence upon him as he constructs a nexus of meanings. As they lead into a discussion of Berger and Luckmann's The Social Construction of Reality<sup>210</sup> Giles and Woolfe<sup>211</sup> find that these ways of seeing and understanding, which become habitual and taken-for-granted, are acquired as the individual becomes socialised and develops an identity which is itself a social product.

Thus culture may be seen as a constant in the sense that it relates to everything that is familiar and ongoing in the way of life of the groups being considered: the culture of those seen as deprived has a permanence which needs to be recognised by the professional people who so label them; equally well, during their training and in their practice the latter have acquired allegiance to a culture which offers them support

as they go about their duties.<sup>212</sup> Culture may also be seen as a variable in the sense that individuals and groups change in response to alterations in their life situations. Becker<sup>213</sup> offers a useful view of culture as a dynamic process which counters any suggestion that, even when culture is seen as a constant, group members need be unduly constrained by it: in fact, answers to fundamental questions about the group (perhaps even about its very existence) must be sought on a continuing basis if its culture is to remain viable.

This idea of the potential variability of culture would seem to have particular use in a study of the kind here described for it suggests that cultural differences, seen as at the base of the concept of deprivation, may be capable of reconciliation. It may be found too that the process of professional socialisation, which probably has much to do with the easy availability of the 'deprivation' label, is less effective than is usually supposed and that close examination of their conceptions of deprivation will help these professionals reconsider the use of such labels.

It can be seen from the foregoing that a phenomenological view of the social action under consideration is going to be dominant in this thesis: it is assumed that the way in which the subjects and their clients make sense of their everyday social worlds, the way in which they define and solve their problems, is influenced by their positions in the social and economic hierarchy. Optimism has been expressed about the potential variability of culture and about the possible shallowness of professional socialisation but whether there can be a changing of consciousness of professional people such as the subjects of this enquiry remains to be seen.

##### 5. Conceptions of deprivation and the problems generated

It is suspected that the ideas which lie behind the use of the word [deprivation] are responsible for much that is unjust, hurtful, demeaning and wasteful of talent, particularly as they are applied to children at school.<sup>11</sup>

When these words were used in the first paragraph of Section 2:

'Deprivation - the idea' it was also suggested that 'those with influence who use the word and the concepts that go with it, such as teachers, social workers and some kinds of official, are often unaware of the impact their use of the very idea has upon the lives of people with whom they are concerned'.<sup>12</sup> The present research project is based upon this belief.

Within the literature on deprivation there is much to suggest that there are many who see few problems in the use of the term; yet it has been possible to demonstrate in this opening chapter:

- (a) that there is a lack of agreement about the meaning of the word;
- (b) that a range of ideas stems from its use, often having an ideological basis; and
- (c) that it provides an easily applied label which may be associated with low teacher-expectations - a label which the 'deprived child' is most likely to live up to.

Because the concept of deprivation is diffuse the related literature is difficult to survey in any complete way and it has been regretted in Section 4(a), above, that the ideological dimension is frequently avoided by those who attempt such surveys. It would seem that authors engaged in work of this kind urgently seek evidence of objective measurement of deprivation and in their incessant search for measurable criteria the subjective aspects of the concept tend to be ignored.

When deprivation is conceived of as being cyclical and existing within particular family groupings over generations then tidy - and sometimes sinister - solutions may be seen to exist. Under 4(c), above, attention has been given to this view and notice taken of the DHSS/SSRC research programme currently being concluded and reported upon. From the evidence gathered during the research project upon which this thesis

is based it is clear that some of the subjects interviewed were sympathetic towards the idea of a cycle of deprivation: some notorious families were identified on the Meadowland Estate and the problems they presented were thought to have existed well before the present generation. Yet, however convincing such local examples may appear in the context of under-achieving and unsatisfactory primary school pupils, the so far incomplete evidence from the DHSS/SSRC research warns against acceptance of a cycle of deprivation.

Problems generated by the different ideological positions available to those who study the concept of deprivation have been raised in the above discussion, particularly under 4(d). The author finds that an apolitical approach to the study is not possible and, although one needs to be cautious about partisan adoption of any one theoretical model, a conceptual framework is necessary for any such study and in the building of this ideological decisions have to be faced. In 4(d)(vi), above, the author considers the problem and indicates which of the theories examined he has found to be most useful for the task in hand. The discussion is continued in Chapter 2 in the context of the field work undertaken.

#### 6. Hypotheses<sup>214</sup> to be examined

The two groups of statements set down below under 'A' and 'B' have suggested themselves during consideration of this research problem and in Chapter 4 the statements shown under 'A' will be examined in turn with reference to the recorded testimonies of subjects interviewed and to other field notes, for example those relating to periods of participant observation. The statements written under 'B' will be considered in the final chapter.

A. The label 'deprived child' is used by teachers and other adults responsible for education and welfare when:<sup>215</sup>

- I a child is seen as poorly-clad, ill-fed, unsatisfactorily housed, having insufficient sleep, indifferent health and suffering from a general sense of insecurity;
- II a child is seen as shabby, unclean and unattractive;
- III a child is seen as destructive, violent, anti-social and immoral;
- IV a child is seen as having low aspirations, being inept, poorly organised and lacking in social skills;
- V a child is seen as lacking a worthwhile culture and having little appreciation of the good things of life.

B. It is posited that:<sup>216</sup>

- I such labelling arises out of cultural differences between teachers and other adults responsible for education and welfare and the children seen as deprived;
- II such labelling leads to low teacher-expectations;
- III such labelling leads to low achievement on the part of the children seen as deprived;
- IV such labelling leads to less than adequate educational provision for the children seen as deprived.

## CHAPTER 1

## REFERENCES AND NOTES

- 1 Rutter, M & Madge, N (1976) Cycles of Disadvantage, Heinemann, p. 1.
- 2 Ainsworth, M D (1961) in Deprivation of Maternal Care, World Health Organization, Geneva - quoted by Rutter
- 3 Jessor, R & Richardson, S (1968) in Perspectives on Human Deprivation, U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare - quoted by Rutter
- 4 Rutter & Madge (1976) p. 2
- 5 Encyclopaedia Britannica
- 6 Reading, H (1979) A Dictionary of the Social Sciences, RKP
- 7 Keddle, N (ed) (1973) Tinker, Tailor...The Myth of Cultural Deprivation, Penguin
- 8 Theodorsen, G & A (1969) A Modern Dictionary of Sociology, Methuen
- 9 The term 'relative deprivation' was used originally by Stouffer, S A (1950) in The American Soldier, Princeton University Press
- 10 Runciman, W G (1966) Relative Deprivation and Social Justice, RKP
- 11 This suspicion has arisen from wide reading as well as observation in the field. A number of the texts quoted by Rutter and Madge in Cycles of Disadvantage (Jessor and Richardson provide a notable example) point in this direction; Keddle recalls in the introduction to Tinker, Tailor... how pervasive the uses of the concept of cultural deprivation have been for the explanation of failure at school - suggesting that the institutionalisation of the concept has increasingly put children seen as deprived in this way at a disadvantage in terms of what is expected of them from the day they enter school, and Bynner provides another example of this line of thinking when he writes:  
"Perhaps...part of this wastage of educational talent is a product of the expectation of academic failure fostered among working-class children in the primary school. The importance of these expectations on the part of pupils and teachers cannot be overestimated."  
[in Rushton, J & Turner, D (eds) (1975) Education and Deprivation, Manchester Univ. Press].
- 12 That is, through categorisation and labelling - the labels being accepted by children who act in accordance with expectations.
- 13 Galbraith, quoted in Butterworth, E & Weir, D (eds) (1972) Social Problems of Modern Britain, Fontana, p. 122

- 14 Barnes, J 'A solution to whose problem?' in Glennester, H & Hatch, S (eds) (1974) Positive Discrimination and Inequality, Fabian research Series 314, p. 9. In querying 'whether poverty is to be seen as a characteristic of society or a cultural attribute of people' Barnes sets the scene for a fuller discussion of the relationship between the concepts of poverty and deprivation. The former would seem to relate objectively measurable criteria, the latter to life styles: the two are not mutually exclusive but it is proposed that the former is essentially quantitative while the latter is qualitative and likely to attract judgemental comment.
- 15 Corrigan, P 'Deviance and deprivation' in Abrams, P (ed) (1978) Work, Urbanism and Inequality, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, pp. 255-6
- 16 Abrams (1978) p. 254
- 17 Ditto, pp. 258-262
- 18 'The advocates of this perspective...point to the covertly relative nature of supposedly absolute standards and emphasize the importance of subjective socially and historically conditioned definitions in determining what particular people at particular times and places regard as wrong, weird or intolerable.' (Abrams, pp. 258-9)  
Among his examples Corrigan cites Rowntree's assertion that a certain calorific intake was essential to subsistence and that poverty was the condition of having less than that intake and declares that in the real world people do not take in calories; they eat food. He goes on to show the unreality of Rowntree's assumptions about the nature of the process by which cash becomes calories. A key sentence reads:  

"A meal is a social activity shaped as much by the expectations and standards of the culture in which one lives as by economic resources and knowledge." (Abrams, p. 259)
- 19 Abrams (1978), p. 262
- 20 Ditto, Ch. 5
- 21 Plowden (1967) Children and their Primary Schools, Report of the Central Advisory Council for Education (England), HMSO, Para. 151
- 22 Demaine, J 'Compensatory education and social policy' in Craft, M, Raynor, J & Cohen, L (eds) (1980 - 3rd edition) Linking Home and School, Harper & Row, pp. 109-110
- 23 Craft (1980) p. 111. It can be claimed that Demaine's argument is vulnerable to Bernstein's thesis that education (and, hence, educators' practical culture) must be universal or, at least, reasonably inclusive. This is certainly a contrary view to that here attributed to Keddie but in his contention that the "introduction of the child to the universalistic meanings of public forms of thought is not 'compensatory education': it is education" (School and Society (eds) Cosin et al, RKP, 1977 Edition, p. 68) Bernstein may be seen to help bridge the difference between Demaine and Keddie. He concludes by pointing out that education may not set out to make children middle class but the



23 (contd)

implicit values underlying the form and content of the educational environment might. The gap between the cultural affiliations of teachers and those of children seen as in need of compensatory education would seem to remain.

24 For example, Robinson, P (1976) Education and Poverty, Methuen

25 Keddie (1975) p. 11

26 Baratz, S & J E (1970) 'Early childhood intervention: the science basis of institutionalized racism' in Cashdan et al Language and Education, RKP - quoted by Keddie

27 Wax, M & R (1964) Formal Education in an American Indian Community, Social Problems Monograph II, Spring - quoted by Keddie

28 Hargreaves, D H 'Reactions to labelling' in Hammersley, N & Woods, P (eds) (1976) The Process of Schooling, RKP

29 HMI Reports: Primary Education in England, 1978  
Aspects of Secondary Education in England, 1979, HMSO  
 Rutter, M et al (1979) Fifteen Thousand Hours, Open Books

30 Newsam, P, Education Officer, Inner London Education Authority, in the BBC 1 Programme Education Matters 3 Mar 1980. ILA has followed up Newsam's initiative, conducting seminars - the first being at Festival Hall in Oct. 1981 - on the theme 'Underachievement - Race, Gender and Social Class'

31 HMI Report: Educational Provision by the Inner London Education Authority, 1980, HMSO

32 Nash, R 'Camouflage in the classroom' in New Society, 22 Apr 1971

33 Chazan, M, Laing, A, Cox, T, Jackson, S, Lloyd, G (1976) Deprivation and School Progress, Schools Council Research and Development Project in Compensatory Education, Schools Council Publications, Ch 1

34 Chazan et al (1976) p. 7

35 Ditto, p. 10

36 Ditto, p. 7

37 Friedman's 'Cultural deprivation: a commentary in the sociology of knowledge' Journal of Educational Thought I (2) 1967, is a most notable omission

38 In their discussion of the term 'cultural deprivation' Chazan et al have used the sub-headings 'sensory deprivation', 'linguistic deprivation' and 'lack of parental interest in child's education' and they have quoted research into these factors, showing that such

38 (contd)

aspects of 'cultural deprivation' are capable of objective measurement. However true this may be, their failure to indicate possible ideological positions has caused an incomplete picture to be presented.

- 39 Matthews, R C O, Chairman, SSRC, writer of preface to Rutter & Madge (1976)
- 40 Rutter & Madge (1976) p. 325
- 41 Ditto, p. 327
- 42 Ditto, p. 4
- 43 Ditto, p. 13
- 44 Chazan, M et al (1976) p. 8
- 45 Ditto, p. 5
- 46 Ditto, p. 38
- 47 Kelsall, R K & H M (1971) Social Disadvantage and Educational Opportunity, Holt, Rinehart & Winston
- 48 Ditto, p. 39
- 49 Corrigan (1978)
- 50 Kelsalls(1971) p. 40
- 51 Ditto, pp. 42/43
- 52 Deutsch, M 'The disadvantaged child and the learning process' in Passow, A H (ed) (1963) Education in Depressed Areas, Teachers' College Press, Columbia University, NY
- 53 Kelsalls (1971) p. 51
- 54 DHSS Report of Committee on One-parent Families, 1974, HMSO  
Chairman: The Hon Sir Morris Finer
- 55 Goldberg, M 'Factors affecting educational attainment in depressed urban areas' in Passow (1963)
- 56 Jones, J 'Social class and the under fives' in New Society, 22 Dec 1966
- 57 Dennison, D (ed) (1972) A Pattern of Disadvantage, National Children's Bureau, NFER
- 58 Rutter & Madge (1976) p. 3.
- 59 Ditto, p. 302
- 60 Ditto, Preface

- 61 SSRC Newsletter 27, April 1975
- 62 Coffield, F, Robinson, P & Sarsby, J (1980) write in A Cycle of Deprivation? Heinemann, p. 1:  

'The idea of a cycle of deprivation is not a new one, although the phrase was made popular by a leading British politician, Sir Keith Joseph, in the early 1970s. As early as 1921 a book was published by Jamieson Hurry under the title Poverty and its Vicious Circles.'
- 63 Joseph, K 'The cycle of deprivation' speech at Conference of Pre-school Playgroups Association, 29 Jun 1972, para. 4
- 64 Sir Keith Joseph's Birmingham speech, 19 Oct 1974
- 65 Robinson, P (1976) Education and Poverty, Methuen, p. 39
- 66 Wright, C H & Lunn, J E (1971) 'Sheffield problem families; a follow-up of their sons and daughters' in Community Medicine, 26 November, pp. 301-7; 3 December, pp. 315-21 - quoted by Robinson
- 67 Goddard, H H (1912) The Kallikak Family, Macmillan - quoted by Robinson
- 68 The Guardian, 18 July, 1979 - article by Sir Keith Joseph in the 'Class War' Series, p. 7
- 69 Robinson, P (1976) p. 34. Ideas of Goddard used in the context of Joseph's speeches
- 70 Robinson, P (1976), pp. 34-5
- 71 As Reference 66 above
- 72 Robinson, P (1976) p. 38
- 73 As Reference 68 above
- 74 SSRC Newsletter 27, April, 1975
- 75 Research Notes 9/22 August, 1975
- 76 The results of this study are written up in Coffield, F, Robinson, P & Sarsby, J A A Cycle of Deprivation? A Case Study of Four Families, Heinemann, 1980. This volume is No. 2 in the series 'Studies in Deprivation and Disadvantage' in which all projects of the DHSS/SSRC national survey will be reported eventually. A third volume in this series is just to hand, it is Brown, M & Madge, N Despite the Welfare State, Heinemann, 1982. This is a valuable text in which the authors examine the contentious area of explanations for patterns of deprivation: it helpfully extends the work of Rutter and Madge and it is regretted that it was not available when this literature survey was being written.
- 77 Rutter & Madge (1976) - Preface

78 As Reference 68 above

79 Telephone conversation, 14 Dec 79

80 Coffield et al (1980) p. 1

81 Holman, R (1978) Poverty: Explanations of Social Deprivation, Martin Robertson, p. 117

In the Appendix to A Cycle of Deprivation? Coffield and his associates critically review a number of models which demonstrate a cycle of deprivation

82 Clark, P (1975) 'Compensatory education: the underlying stances and teachers' attitudes' in Urban Education, Vol. IX, No. 4, January, 1975.

83 For example, during an interview on 28 Jan 76 Mr. 'No', Acting Head Teacher of Meadowland Primary School, spoke of the same families appearing again and again when forms of deprivation were being considered. He named seven families in this connection. Research Notes 17/1

84 Coffield et al (1980)

85 Ditto, p. 163

86 Ditto, pp.163-4

87 Watson, D R (1975) 'Urban education and cultural competences' in Urban Education, Vol. VIII, No. 1

88 Bernstein, B 'A critique on the concept of compensatory education' in Rubinstein, D & Stoneman, C (eds) (1970) Education for Democracy, Penguin, and later as 'Education cannot compensate for society' in Cosin, B R et al (eds) (1971) School and Society, RKP, and elsewhere

89 Urban Education, Vol. VIII, No. 1, p. 21

90 Ditto, p. 22

91 Friedman, N L (1967) 'Cultural deprivation: a commentary in the sociology of knowledge' in Journal of Educational Thought, I (2), also in Paynor, J & Harden, J (eds) (1973) Cities, Communities and the Young, RKP, and elsewhere

92 Urban Education, Vol. VIII, No. 1, pp. 22/23

93 Parsons, C T (1952) The Social System, New York Free Press

94 Riessman, F (1962) The Culturally Deprived Child, Harper & Row

95 As Reference 91 above

96 As Reference 94 above

- 97 Deutsch, M (1963) 'The disadvantaged child and the learning process' in Passow, A H (ed) Education in Depressed Areas, Teachers' College Press
- 98 Deutsch extract in Raynor, J & Harden, J (eds) Cities, Communities and the Young, p. 210
- 99 Piaget, J quoted in Hunt, J Mc V (1961) Intelligence and Experience, Ronald Press, NY.
- 100 Raynor & Harden (1973) p. 210
- 101 Ditto, pp. 211-2
- 102 Ditto, p. 212
- 103 Ditto, p. 213
- 104 Ditto, p. 214
- 105 Ditto, p. 260
- 106 Ditto, p. 268
- 107 Elvin, L 'The positive roles of society and the teacher' in Peters, R S (ed) (1969) Perspectives on Plowden, RKP
- 108 Extolled with some vehemence in A Razzell's Juniors: A Postscript to Plowden, Penguin, 1968
- 109 The articles in Peters Perspectives on Plowden provide a good basis for consideration of the ideology implicit in Plowden. The early chapters of Sharp, R & Green, A (1975) Education and Social Control, RKP, are also useful in any such critique
- 110 For example '...a diet of compensatory "planned enrichment"' (Deutsch, 1964). This would function as a counteractive 'antidote' for the 'experiential inadequacies' of cultural deprivation, and afford lower-class children some familiarity with pre-school experiences and objects common in the lives of middle-class children.' (Friedman) It is difficult to be apolitical in the manner attempted by the Plowden Committee when dealing with such material.
- 111 Schools Council Working Paper 27 Cross'd with Adversity (1970) Evans & Methuen
- 112 Newsom Report Half Our Future, HMSO, 1963
- 113 Reported in The Guardian, 15 January, 1970
- 114 Abrams, P (1978), p. 254
- 115 Davie, R et al (1972) From Birth to Seven, Longman in association with the National Children's Bureau

- 116 Wedge, P & Prosser, H (1973) Born to Fail? Arrow Books in association with the National Children's Bureau
- 117 Holman, R (ed) (1973 Edition) Socially Deprived Families in Britain, The Bedford Square Press
- 118 Kellmer Pringle, M 'Children who are "vulnerable" or "at risk"' in Raynor, J & Harris, E (eds) (1977) Schooling in the City, Ward Lock Educational
- 119 Holt, J (1974) Escape from Childhood, Penguin
- 120 Douglas, M (1978) Purity and Danger, RKP, provides evidence of how certain child-rearing practices are repugnant to observers from other cultures
- 121 Holman, R (1976) Inequality in Child Care, Child Poverty Action Group Pamphlet
- 122 Robinson, P (1976) p. 42
- 123 Horton, J (1966) in The American Journal of Sociology, May, pp. 701-13
- 124 Urban Education, Vol. VIII, No. 1, p. 25
- 125 Ditto, pp. 24-5
- 126 Based upon a definition provided in Open University Course E351, Urban Education, Block I, p. 73
- 127 This is very much the message of the Child Poverty Action Group and the Low Pay Unit. See, for example, Field, F (ed) Education and the Urban Crisis, RKP, 1977, pp. 128-9.
- 128 Valentine, C A (1971) 'Deficit, difference and bicultural models of Afro-American behaviour' in Harvard Educational Review, No. 41(2) pp. 137-157
- 129 Robinson, P (1976) p. 47
- 130 As Reference 123 above
- 131 Williams, F (ed) (1970) Language and Poverty, Narkham Publishing Company
- 132 Clark, P (1975) p. 352
- 133 Dumont, R V & Wax, M L 'Cherokee school society and the inter-cultural classroom' in Cosin, B R et al (eds) (1971) School and Society, RKP
- 134 Dumont & Wax - their quotation first appeared in Human Organization (Fall, 1969) 28 (3), pp. 217-26

- 135 Baratz, S D & Baratz, J C\* in Raynor, J & Harris, E (eds) (1977) Schooling in the City, Ward Lock Educational, p. 268  
\* Reference is to 'Early childhood intervention: the social science base of institutional racism' in HER, 1970, 40, pp. 29-50
- 136 Cicciorelli, V G 'Educational models for the disadvantaged' in Raynor & Harris (1977), p. 268
- 137 Labov, W (1969) 'The logic of non-standard English', first appeared in Georgetown Monographs on Language and Linguistics, Vol. XXII, then in Williams, F (1970) - see Reference 98 above - and elsewhere, e.g., Keddle, Reference 138 below.
- 138 Keddle, N (ed) (1973) Tinker, Tailor...The Myth of Cultural Deprivation, Penguin
- 139 Keddle (1973) p. 8
- 140 Keddle, N 'Classroom knowledge' in Young, M F D (ed) (1971) Knowledge and Control, Collier Macmillan
- 141 Urban Education, Vol. IX, No. 4, p. 345
- 142 Pratt, J & Travers, A (1979) Depriving the Deprived, Kogan Page
- 143 Robinson, P (1976) p. 45
- 144 Carmichael, S & Hamilton, C V (1967) Black Power, Random House
- 145 For example, Enoch Powell's 'rivers of blood' speech in Birmingham on 20 April, 1968
- 146 For example, the Urban Aid Programme introduced on the initiative of the Prime Minister, Harold Wilson. In a speech responding to Mr Powell, also in Birmingham, he said 'I am not prepared to stand aside and see this country engulfed by the racial conflict which calculating orators or ignorant prejudice can create...' (5 May, 1968). An example at local authority level is the measures which have been taken in Bristol to lessen the chance of further outbreaks of violence such as occurred in the St Pauls district in April 1980
- 147 Coard, B (1971) How the West Indian is made educationally subnormal in the British school system, New Beacon Books  
Giles, R (1977) The West Indian Experience in British Schools: Multi-racial Education and Social Disadvantage in London, HEB  
A contrary view is offered by Driver, G in 'How West Indians do better at school (especially the girls)' - New Society, 17 January, 1980. Driver's recent research in two north of England schools, two Midland schools and one Home Counties school is being looked at with some surprise and students in this field are sceptical about the chance of a reversal of recent trends.  
Rampton, A West Indian Children in our Schools, HMSO, 1980, offers a balanced view

- 148 Kozol, J (1968) Death at an Early Age, Penguin
- 149 Ditto, pp. 22-23
- 150 Urban Education, Vol. VIII, No. 1, p. 29
- 151 The author has found shades of this thinking at conferences of the National Association for Multi-racial Education (NAME) and, less surprisingly, amongst members of the Caribbean Teachers' Association.
- 152 Urban Education, Vol. VIII, No. 1, p. 29
- 153 In the late 1960s a Black Studies programme was set up under the inspiration of B. Woodroffe, then teaching at Tulse Hill School but soon to move (in the early 1970s) to the ILEA Centre for Urban Educational Studies before becoming leader of the Authority's Multi-ethnic Inspectorate, now a flourishing section of some six Inspectors and numerous advisory teachers. The Black Studies increasingly became a student-run operation with staff supervision relating largely to examination requirements, GCE 'O' level and CSE. At the time of the Tulse Hill sixth formers' visit to the author's college (June, 1974) student administration of the course seemed virtually absolute.
- 154 For example, at the Conference of the National Association for Multi-racial Education (NAME), Coventry College, Easter 1976.
- 155 It is interesting to note that an independent school intended to serve, in particular, the needs of children of West Indian origin opened under the auspices of the Seventh Day Adventists in North London in September, 1980
- 156 Produced by R Gilon - see Reference 147 - and by Jeffcoate, R (1979) Positive Image: Towards a Multiracial Curriculum, Chameleon Books
- 157 The references given at 147 above also relate to this but the signs are that access courses of the kind described in the text offer the greatest hope. Of the twelve students recruited in September, 1979, five have joined the B Ed course at the author's college and two have joined diploma courses (one in Religious and Social Studies and the other in Environmental Studies) at the same college, three other students have gained places on degree courses at polytechnics and the remaining two have re-enrolled for courses at the technical college where the bulk of the access course teaching has taken place. The seven students who did not join the B Ed course failed to obtain the 'O' level standard in Mathematics now required by the DES of all entering teacher training.

A further factor which helps make teacher training unattractive to young people of Caribbean extraction is the belief that discrimination exists among those responsible for employing and promoting black teachers. NAME has recently issued a position paper on this and N Gibbs, formerly President of the Caribbean Teachers' Association in London, has carried out some useful research on the matter among serving teachers of West Indian origin as part of her studies for B Ed (Hons) - part-time. Published under the title West Indian Teachers Speak Out by the C.T.A. and the C.R.E. 1980.



- 158 The Driver research mentioned under Reference 147 is interesting in this respect
- 159 Avery Hill College/Woolwich College
- 160 Klein, J (1967) Samples from English Cultures, RKP  
Hoggart, R (1958) The Uses of Literacy, Penguin  
Frankenberg, R (1966) Communities in Britain, Penguin
- 161 See, for example, Wedge, P & Prosser, H (1973) Born to Fail, Arrow Books
- 162 Keddie, N (1973) p. 8.
- 163 Ditto, p. 9. In the introduction Keddie does not specify what such children are capable of but she does indicate that their potential is to be examined by the contributing authors. Keddie includes a number of suggestions concerning the capabilities of these children in her article 'Classroom Knowledge' - see Reference 140.
- 164 Newson, J & E (1963) Infant Care in an Urban Community  
(1968) Four Years Old in an Urban Community  
(1977) Perspectives on School at Seven Years Old,  
Allen & Unwin
- 165 Eisenberg, L 'Strengths of the inner city child' in Raynor, J & Harris, E (eds) (1977) Schooling in the City, Ward Lock Educational
- 166 Postman, N (1970) 'The politics of reading' in Harvard Educational Review, Vol. XL, No. 2, May: also in Keddie, N (1973)
- 167 Keddie, N (1973) p. 92
- 168 Postman, N & Weingartner, C (1971) Teaching as a Subversive Activity, Penguin
- 169 Raynor, J & Harris, E (eds) (1977) p. 254
- 170 Young, M & Willmott, P Family and Kinship in East London, 1962 revised edition, Penguin (first published 1957)
- 171 Rosser, C & Harris, C (1968) The Family and Social Change, RKP
- 172 Willmott, P & Young, M (1960) Family and Class in a London Suburb, Penguin
- 173 Gavron, H (1968) The Captive Wife, Penguin
- 174 Bott, E Family and Social Network, Tavistock, 2nd edition 1971
- 175 Raynor, J & Harris, E (eds) (1977) p. 254
- 176 Ditto, p. 256
- 177 This allusion to 'lack of flexibility' may well relate to Bernstein's notion of such children's thinking being 'context-bound' - flexibility coming only if they are able to be 'context-free' and to gain access to 'universalistic orders of meaning'.

- 178 Raynor, J & Harris, E (eds) (1977) p. 257
- 179 Ditto, p. 257
- 180 This may be seen to contradict, in part at least, Labov's insistence upon their verbal skills
- 181 Urban Education, Vol. VIII, No. 1, p. 32
- 182 See, for example, Woods, P (1977) The Ethnography of the School, Units 7-8 of O.U. Course E202
- 183 Cicciorelli, V G 'Educational models for the disadvantaged' in Raynor, J & Harris, E (eds) (1977) Schooling in the City, Ward Lock Educational
- 184 Suggested earlier (see Note 106) to contain undertones of conservative cynicism
- 185 Raynor & Harris (1977) pp. 263-4
- 186 Ditto, pp. 264-71
- 187 Ditto, p. 275
- 188 Robinson, P (1976) p. 47
- 189 Flude, M 'Sociological accounts of differential educational attainment' in Flude, M & Ahier, J (eds) (1974) Educability, Schools and Ideology, Croom Helm
- 190 Embling, J F 'Control over educational expenditure in England and Wales' in Bell, R E et al (eds) (1973) Education in Great Britain and Ireland, RKP
- 191 Byrne, D S & Williamson, W 'Some intra-regional variations in educational provision and their bearing upon educational attainment - the case of the north-east' in Raynor, J & Harden, J (eds) (1973) Equality and City Schools, RKP
- 192 Boaden, N (1971) Urban Policy-making Influences in County Boroughs in England and Wales, Cambridge University Press
- 193 Eggleston, J 'Some environmental correlates of extended secondary education in England' in Swift, D F (ed) (1970) Basic Readings in the Sociology of Education, RKP
- 194 From Education, Economy and Politics, O.U. Course E352, Block V (prepared by Swift, D, Williamson, W & Byrne, D) p. 61
- 195 Ditto, p. 56
- 196 Byrne, Fletcher & Williams in O.U. Course E351, Block VI, Part 1 'Space, policy and resources' pp. 21-29
- 197 Ditto, p. 29

- 198 Jencks, C, et al (1972) conclude in Inequality (Penguin) that educational reform, involving considerable increase in resources, cannot bring about economic and social equality.
- 199 Tyler, W (1977) The Sociology of Educational Inequality, Methuen, p. 131
- 200 Runciman, W G (1966) Relative Deprivation and Social Justice, RKP
- 201 Pinker, R (1971) Social Theory & Social Policy, Heinemann, p. 110
- 202 Ditto, p. 111
- 203 Tyler, W (1977) p. 122
- 204 Coffield et al (1980) p. 213
- 205 D. Gorbett's article 'The new sociology of education' in Education for Teaching, Association of Teachers in Colleges and Departments of Education, Autumn 1972, provides useful discussion on such methodology
- 206 Robinson, P (1976) p. 43
- 207 Quite apart from debate generated amongst the author's immediate contacts, the publication of this article in an internationally-distributed journal initiated a correspondence with interested students of this field in a number of countries
- 208 Keddie (1973) p. 8
- 209 Giles, K & Woolfe, R 'Deprivation, disadvantage and compensation', O.U. Course E202, Units 25-26, OUP 1977, p. 35
- 210 Berger, P L & Luckman, T (1971 edition) The Social Construction of Reality, Penguin
- 211 Giles & Woolfe, E202, Units 25-26, p. 32
- 212 Hughes, E L, Becker, H S & Geer, B 'Student culture and academic effort' in Cosin, B R et al (eds) School and Society. They describe well the subtle way such a culture may build up during professional training. Their article relates to medical students but some of the ideas transfer easily to students preparing for other professions
- 213 Becker, E The Birth and Death of Meaning, Penguin, 1972 edition
- 214 It is not proposed to set up hypotheses with the intention of testing them precisely in the manner of the physical scientist. These hypotheses are offered as suppositions to be used as a basis for reasoning: they are starting points from which to examine the evidence given by subjects interviewed and the impressions noted in field-work. Using this evidence it is intended to question the validity of the suppositions as rigorously as possible with the available material and expose any groundless assumptions which may be present within these groups of hypotheses - remembering, of course, the limited nature of this field-work.

- 215 In Ch. 5 there is consideration of how many of these criteria need to be satisfied for the label to be attached.
- 216 The statements under B are considered in Ch. 5 in the context of the findings reported in Ch. 4; they relate closely to the material used in consideration of statements AI - AV

CHAPTER 2      PRACTICAL AND THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS:

A STATEMENT ON METHODS AND APPROACH

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## C H A P T E R    2

### PRACTICAL AND THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS:

#### A STATEMENT ON METHODS AND APPROACH

In Chapter 1 the problem to be examined has been discussed, selections from the literature on deprivation have been considered and attempts have been made to establish a conceptual context for the work in hand. It will have become clear to the reader that symbolic interaction in general and labelling theory in particular are to guide research activity throughout the project.

A chronology relating to the collection of data for this project is given at Figure I but it is necessary to relate what has arisen during preparation for field-work and how consideration has been given to the use of scientific and quasi-scientific methods before writing more precisely about the procedures actually used and making reference to this chronology.

From the time that first plans were laid for this project it was clear that studies would relate to the sociology of knowledge and it was never intended 'to test specific hypotheses derived from current theories'.<sup>1</sup> Like the research of Hargreaves at Lumley School it was to be 'exploratory in nature' but it was appreciated that 'a relatively unstructured research procedure was fraught with difficulties and dangers' and it was hoped that something of what was to be observed might be measured and subjected to some kind of statistical analysis. It will be seen that this hope has been pushed more and more into the background as it has been found more realistic and advantageous to work 'within the "phenomenological" rather than the "positivistic" paradigm'.<sup>2</sup>

FIGURE IChronology of research activity

- 19 May 75 Interview with Mr 'C', Administrative Assistant, at the County Education Office
- 27 May 75 Letter to County Education Officer reporting research project and asking specific questions
- 25 Jun 75 Telephone conversation with Mr 'M', Senior Educational Psychologist, of the County Education Office
- 8 Jul 75 Telephone conversation with Mr 'Q', Educational Psychologist, of the Regional Office serving the City
- 18 Jul 75 Interview with Mr 'B', Administrative Officer concerned with Special Education, at the County Education Office
- 8 Aug 75 Interview with Mr 'Q', Educational Psychologist, at the City Guidance Centre
- 22 Aug 75 Interview with Mr Robinson at Keele University
- 29 Sep 75 Phone conversation with Mr 'Mo', Acting Head of Meadowland Primary School
- 29 Sep 75 Phone conversation with Mr 'X', Head of Blair Primary School
- 6 Oct 75 Interview with Mr 'Mo' at Meadowland Primary School
- 6 Oct 75 Interview with Mr 'X' at Blair Primary School
- 8 Jan 76 Phone conversation with Mr 'Mo', Acting Head of Meadowland Primary School
- 8 Jan 76 Phone conversation with Mr 'Ca', Education Officer, of the Regional Office serving the City
- 28 Jan 76 Interview with Mr 'Mo' at Meadowland Primary School
- 28 Jan 76 Interview with Miss 'S', Deputy Head Teacher,\* at Meadowland Primary School (\* also Remedial Teacher for the Junior Section)
- 28 Jan 76 Interview with Mrs 'J', Teacher-in-Charge of Infants, at Meadowland Primary School
- 1 Apr 76 Full day of participant-observation at Meadowland Primary School (Tape-recorded)
- 7 May 76 Interview with Mrs 'H'\* at Meadowland Primary School (\* Teacher of Year II Juniors) (Tape-recorded)
- 7 May 76 Interview with Mr 'H'\* at Meadowland Primary School (\* Teacher of Year III Juniors) (Tape-recorded)
- 21 May 76 Participant-observation period in Indoors Games Club and Cookery Club at Meadowland Primary School (Tape-recorded)

- 21 May 76 Interview with Mrs 'J', Teacher-in-Charge of Infants, at Meadowland Primary School (Tape-recorded)
- 21 May 76 Interview with Mrs 'Q'\* at Meadowland Primary School (\* Teacher of Year I Juniors) (Tape-recorded)
- 20 Jul 76 Interview with Mrs 'J', Teacher-in-Charge of Infants, at Meadowland Primary School (Tape-recorded)
- 20 Jul 76 Interview with Mrs 'T'\* at Meadowland Primary School (\* Remedial Infant Teacher) (Tape-recorded)
- 20 Jul 76 Interview with Mrs 'Q'\* at Meadowland Primary School (\* Teacher of Year I Juniors) (Tape-recorded)
- 5 Aug 76 Interview with Mr 'S', Senior Education Welfare Officer, at Divisional Education Office
- 11 Aug 76 Interview with Mr 'T', Deputy Manager, City D.H.S.S. Office
- 6 Oct 76 Interview with Mrs 'X', Assistant Planner, City Department of Architecture and Town Planning
- 25 Oct 76 -ditto-
- 18 Nov 76 Interview with Mr 'Ta', Social Worker, County Social Services Department at the Divisional Office serving the City
- 23 Nov 76 Telephone conversation with Mrs 'Se', Clerical Officer of the Divisional Education Office
- 7 Dec 76 -ditto-
- 6 Jan 77 Interview with Mr 'Bb', Housing Manager, and Mrs 'W', Lettings Officer, at the City Housing Department
- 19 Jan 77 Interview with Miss 'F', Secretary of City Women's Aid, at The Refuge
- 14 Feb 77 Telephone conversation with Mr 'I', Head of Meadowland Primary School (now returned from sabbatical leave)
- 15 Feb 77 Telephone conversations with Ms 'C' and Ms 'S' of local Gingerbread Groups and Miss 'N' of the City Volunteers' Bureau and Citizens' Advice Bureau
- 22 Feb 77 Interview with Mr 'I', Head of Meadowland Primary School
- 7 Apr 77 Telephone conversations with Divisional Education Office, the local Educational Guidance Centre and the Education Welfare Office. These were not significant interviews in terms of material gathered but insights were gained into the work and procedures of these offices.
- 4 Apr 79 Telephone conversation with Mr 'I', Head of Meadowland Primary School



- 4 Apr 79 Telephone conversation with Mrs 'X', Assistant Planner,  
City Department of Architecture and Town Planning
  - 5 Apr 79 Interview with Mrs 'X', Assistant Planner, at the City  
Planning Office
  - 30 Nov 79 Computer search at London University Institute of Education  
Library (E.R.I.C. and Sociological Abstracts systems)
  - 14 Dec 79 Phone conversation with Mr Wainwright, Information Officer,  
S.S.R.C.
- 

Delamont writes: 'The term fieldwork comes from social anthropology and is a way of referring to doing participant observation. It means studying situations by immersing oneself in them...in the research milieu.'<sup>3</sup> In early tentative planning for this project fieldwork as defined by Delamont was not envisaged: on the contrary, although an understanding of subjects' conceptions of deprivation was sought from the very first draft of a research outline, it was then thought possible to gain an understanding through questionnaires and structured interviews. It would have been difficult to operate the enquiry otherwise had the first submitted statement of intended research<sup>4</sup> been carried through for it was an over-ambitious plan and it is now clear that it would have required the services of a team of research assistants to range selected districts within the County gathering data for comparative analysis from schools, education offices and social work agencies: participant observation in its usual sense would not have been possible and certainly not for just one researcher. It was when a supervisor asked if the study was to be grounded in social administration and suggested that the first statement of intended research had the appearance of a government departmental survey that the need for a small-scale, controlled study of much greater depth became apparent and what was really possible, methodologically, had to be carefully considered.

Enquiries started at County Hall and various areas of the County's education service were looked at with co-operative officials in an attempt to find some on-going activity in which the views held on deprivation by the adults concerned was likely to be of particular and demonstrable significance. Initially a well-publicised County Literacy Survey received attention but difficulties were encountered in trying to obtain a break-down of the results so as to know the performance of children in the districts freely acknowledged by County officials to be 'deprived'.

At this time it was thought that a 'one-shot case study' of the kind described by Campbell and Stanley in their article 'Experimental and quasi-experimental methods of research'<sup>5</sup> might be a suitable tool to employ. A sample of some fifty children was to have been selected from four schools - one 'good', one 'average' and one 'poor' primary school and one secondary modern school<sup>6</sup> - and they were, in the judgment of teachers as far as deprivation was concerned, to represent the following categories:

1. Deprived in some respects and seriously under-achieving
2. Deprived but achieving normally for their age
3. Not noticeably deprived but seriously under-achieving
4. Not deprived and achieving normally.

It was intended that the results of tests used in the County Literacy Survey should provide the initial data concerning achievement but it became clear that these results were not held in the schools concerned and, although teachers were quite willing to co-operate in giving details of remedial and compensatory measures being used and even to administer further tests to comply with the requirements of the one-shot case study, it was apparent after further consideration that,

even if the Literacy Survey Tests were to be replicated, such a procedure would not produce very much that was valuable as far as teachers' conceptions of deprivation were concerned. Like Nash and most students who graduated in the field being considered a few years ago, the researcher was 'taught the traditional empiricist methodology of British social science: the procedure known as input-output model'<sup>7</sup> and the seemingly tidy device of the one-shot case study was not lightly abandoned. The Nash research spent time showing how wrong teachers were in their assessments of the social class membership of children's families:<sup>8</sup> it was certainly not the intention in this study to attempt to assess the accuracy or otherwise of teachers' assessments of deprivation, this surely could only be done if there existed absolute standards of deprivation? (As was the case, for example, when Nash checked teachers' conceptions of the social-class membership of their pupils against the Registrar-General's socio-economic groupings for fathers' occupations\*). No, one wanted to learn of their conceptions of deprivation and a major point in Chapter 1 has been that the very diffuseness of the concept renders attempts at objective scaling of little use: it was the subjective impressions of teachers and others that were sought. Thus a 'quasi-experimental' device was rejected because, although it would have allowed the use of statistical tables, it was unlikely to have helped the researcher to gain access to the reality of deprivation as far as the teacher was concerned.

Even so, one remained impressed by the line of advice so well illustrated by Burroughs:<sup>9</sup>

The first step in building up an observation schedule is to identify the limited range of behaviour which is relevant and which is therefore to be observed. One cannot just "observe"; one must observe something.

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\* Though not sacrosanct, the Registrar General's socio-economic groupings do provide a useful yardstick in discussions on social class.

At this stage it was interesting to discover that educational psychologists of the County used the Bristol Social Adjustment Guides.<sup>10</sup> Although 'The child in school guide', in particular, was undoubtedly useful to the psychologist attempting to assess 'problem' children one wondered about the way he or she administered, for example, the 'Interaction with teacher' test: it must have been up to the psychologist to underline the appropriate statement against 'greeting teacher' - the choices were 'waits to be noticed / hails teacher loudly / greets normally / can be surly / never thinks of greeting / is too unaware of people to greet / nothing noticeable'. The fact that the teachers taking part in this research project seemed unaware that this test was being used on their pupils and were, on the whole, satisfied with their own general impressions in this respect helped towards a consideration of the usefulness of Kelly's Personal Construct Theory<sup>11</sup> for this study.\*

It was at this time proposed to have each teacher-subject establish a rank order of deprivation, in its different forms, for the children concerned. Once the teacher had indicated his or her impressions in a general way it was intended to probe, by means of bi-polar constructs, into the nature of the deprivation he or she felt existed: an example concerned maternal deprivation and the scoring at and between possible extremes showed:

cruelly neglectful = 4;	little love shown = 3;
fairly concerned = 2;	loving home = 1.

Other constructs considered at this stage related to physical deprivation (possibly broken down into categories of housing, clothing, food, sleep), linguistic deprivation, social deprivation (various meanings contemplated),

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\* It would seem that the educational psychologists did not confide in the teachers as far as the operation of such tests was concerned.

cultural deprivation, sensory deprivation, emotional deprivation.

The personal construct grid, as such, has not been persevered with: the categories made available seemed to limit unduly the choices open to the subjects but use has certainly been made of the ideas which emerged whilst its suitability was being considered. For interviews conducted in the earlier part of this project sets of questions were put together and the insights gained when examining Kelly's constructs had a bearing upon the kinds of question asked.

If subjects' own conceptions of deprivation were to be arrived at it was clear that the interviewer must not influence the discussion more than was necessary, let alone 'lead the witness', and so it was decided that for the key interviews, which were in the main with teachers, only the most general kind of questioning should take place, simply to map out topic areas, and the subject would be encouraged to talk while a tape-recorder was running. All such recorded conversations would be transcribed verbatim.

The above five paragraphs give an indication of the extent to which scientific or statistically-based approaches have been considered. However, a phenomenological stance has been sustained throughout most of the field work and the following quotation relates:

This methodological approach stands in contrast to the so-called objective approach so dominant today, namely that of viewing the actor from the perspective of an outside, detached observer...the actor acts towards his world on the basis of how he sees it and not on the basis of how the world would appear to the outside observer.<sup>12</sup>

These words help place the emphasis where it is needed as one attempts to understand what is meant when people in responsible positions see school-aged children as deprived.

When the writer attended the British Sociological Association's

Graduate Summer School at Cambridge in July, 1976, he had the opportunity to give a paper on this project to a seminar group of fellow graduates. The theme for Summer School was 'An analysis of Social Class' and this particular group concerned itself with 'Educational Inequality': the researcher was surprised how little the concept of deprivation had been considered by group members and how unfamiliar most were with the details of related issues such as compensatory education. Interest was expressed in the researcher's article on the latter topic<sup>13</sup> and photocopies were obtained; attention was given as well to an outline of the current project. There was a certain amount of puzzlement as to why statistical methods had been rejected as far as the greater part of the research was concerned. The group contained a preponderance of quantitative method scholars and its leader, Anthony Heath, worked at the statistical analysis of data in Professor Halsey's department at Oxford and so it was hardly surprising that the writer's growing preference for the methods of, for example, Becker for this project was not well understood. Numerical notation was seen to be very much easier to work with and it was thought that one would need to write particularly well to emulate Becker. There was a danger of making rather general points and attempting to illustrate them with sensational examples. Even so, it was acknowledged that little was known about individual conceptions of deprivation and it was conceded to be an important area of study. The author was grateful for this detailed questioning of his proposed methodology at this early stage of the project.\*

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\* It is not being suggested that statistical methods could not be used in an investigation of this kind but subsequent study - illustrations of which are given in the remainder of this chapter - persuaded the author that his early position was justified.

Much time has been spent in examining literature concerned with the techniques which seemed most appropriate to this study and Filstead's Qualitative Methodology<sup>14</sup> has been found particularly useful. Becker and Geer's article in this volume 'Participant observation and interviewing: a comparison' brought home the essential difference between the fairly objective questioning used early in this research and the tape-recorded sessions of the key interviews in which both interviewer and interviewee experienced considerable involvement and allowed the former to gain insights built upon observation and some participation within the school.<sup>15</sup> The next article in Filstead contains Trow's comments on the Becker/Geer article and he makes good sense when he writes that different kinds of information about man and society are gathered most fully and most economically in different ways '...the problem under investigation properly dictates the methods of investigation'. He assumes that interviewing and participant observation would rarely produce 'equivalent' kinds of data and 'should not be asked to'; the writer has taken the view that, although more formal interviewing would produce the kind of factual data needed in the early stages of this enquiry, closer involvement with the subjects, leading to participant observation in some of their classrooms, was more appropriate when attempting to discover what the concept of deprivation meant to them. The following chapter in Filstead is a rejoinder to Trow and the debate goes on: it becomes difficult to give unqualified support to either extremes of the argument but one is left with a measure of confidence that the mixture of approaches used in this research will lead to some useful conclusions. Becker writes:<sup>16</sup>

The technique (of participant observation) consists of something more than merely immersing oneself in data and having insights.

Becker and Geer quote from Polya as follows:

'Reason from the results with a "calculus of plausibility"<sup>17</sup>'.

It will be evident that the researcher has been, in general, more concerned with those who label than with those who are labelled and, in broadly accepting the Meadian approach,<sup>18</sup> it has been necessary to attempt to take the role of the labeller and try to understand his perspective. During this process the researcher has from time to time found his own understanding and beliefs brought into doubt as witnesses have offered their testimonies; this has necessitated frequent references back to the ideological positions revealed in Chapter 1 and will clearly influence discussion in the final chapter.

Reference will now be made to the interviews carried out in the research project and recorded in the chronology set down in Figure I. Those referred to above as 'key interviews'\* were tape-recorded and these sessions have been an integral part of the participant observation process which developed as field-work advanced. It is difficult to separate the interviews precisely into categories but it can be said generally that the interviews with officials of various kinds have tended to be rather formal and based upon fairly specific questions whereas those with teachers, although relationships may have started on a formal basis, have become informally conversational for most of the contact time.

It can also be said that over time the situation in which interviews have been held has become noticeably more relaxed and this no doubt has had something to do with the growing confidence of the interviewer as he

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\* The 'key interviews' mentioned above are those sessions with teachers - becoming increasingly less formal - during which most was learnt about conceptions of deprivation. The early school-based sessions soon convinced the researcher that these primary teachers were to be 'key witnesses'.



has learned more about interviewing techniques. In the earlier interviews it was usual to try and keep the respondent talking about the items written on an interview schedule but it became evident that, if the person had an interest in the topic under discussion, such attempts on the part of the interviewer were restricting to the respondent, and could even appear rude. It was shown to be of far greater use to encourage general talk and guide the conversation wherever possible towards the required areas. Again, assiduous note-taking while the respondent was talking clearly did not help the interview situation. The problems simply were (1) to gain the required information, and (2) to record that information.

The above will suggest that when this research project was started it was assumed that there existed within the heads of members of the target population fairly clear-cut ideas about the nature of deprivation: all that was needed was for the right questions to be asked - and there were enough seemingly sound questions on the topic raised in the literature - and the answers to be recorded for later categorisation and analysis.

However, it became apparent that although the well-documented themes appeared over and over again during interviews it was unlikely that answers of a clear-cut objective kind would be forthcoming. The question of income provides a good example: clearly the low income of parents would seem to be likely to contribute to a child's deprived state. Yet very few respondents had any real idea about the size of the income received in the households from which came the children seen as deprived and even if it was known that the children received free school meals and there were other objective indicators of low income, for example, an unemployed parent, social security payments, chronic sickness, these did not automatically draw from the respondent an admission that there

was insufficient money coming into the home.\* Many personal, cultural and even ideological factors seemed to get in the way and to take full account of these a tape-recorder eventually proved to be a most useful tool.

When this instrument was not used and only sketchy note-taking was possible during an interview, quite apart from missed points, there was always the problem of re-interpretation when an account came to be written up later on. Robinson<sup>19</sup> reports the work of Schwartz and Schwartz<sup>20</sup> on this and explains how, on writing up, 'the meaning given to an event as it occurred is subsumed in the wider perspective of subsequent events'. He goes on to report Schutz:<sup>21</sup>

...often in social action the meaning of an event at a point in time only becomes clear when it is re-interpreted in the light of subsequent events. The impossibility of writing up everything the moment it occurs means that to counteract a potentially distorting re-interpretation of an event the sociologist constantly checks his account with those of the actors involved.

Robinson then writes 'The advantage of the photographic/sound techniques being developed by Walker and Adelman<sup>22</sup> would seem to be in preserving a larger "bit of action" to which the researcher can return in later explications of his thesis'.

The strength of the last point is well appreciated by the writer and confidence springs from the knowledge that there exists on tape confirmation of most of the major points made in this thesis, directly from the mouths of the witnesses who have contributed to the study: confidence of this kind can seldom be experienced by researchers who

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\* Perhaps it is unreasonable to expect teachers to have knowledge of actual incomes but there are several examples in the recorded testimonies of stereotypical 'Council-estate families' with more than adequate incomes. There are too suggestions that indicators, such as free school meals (and this is acknowledged in the literature on deprivation as a prime indicator of financial need), reveal more of an ability to make false claims than actual poverty.

have collected their data at second or even third hand from questionnaires and the reports of others. Again, it is necessary to remember that it is the spoken impressions of subjects that provide the prime data for analysis.

It is difficult to say whether the increased use of a tape-recorder happened because there was a realisation that the instrument would allow a fuller involvement of the observer in the ideas of the respondent, or whether there was just a dissatisfaction with the apparent level of accuracy achieved in the reports of interviews which had not been recorded. The researcher's supervisor gave every encouragement to the use of the instrument if it was found to be helpful and thought it unlikely that there would be much objection from the subjects interviewed, unless they were high-ranking officials!

As already indicated, the 'depth' interviews with teachers provide the key data in this thesis and they are almost exclusively tape-recorded. In most cases contact would have been made before the main interview period or periods which would normally be in a classroom, emptied of children, or in the Staff Room. In some cases it was found possible to spend time in a classroom with the children present before the main interviews; on such occasions tape-recordings were sometimes made which helped the researcher, during subsequent analysis, gauge fairly accurately the atmosphere in which the teacher-subjects worked. Participant observation was possible at this stage and the periods of club activity, when there was never a danger of interfering with the teacher's planned work, were valuable in this respect. The 'depth' interview would be at a pre-arranged time with the Deputy Head looking after the class of the teacher concerned: the extensive interviewing which took place would not have been possible without this willing co-operation of Miss 'S'. As indicated above, the interviewer had available questions of a fairly

general nature but only to help keep the discussion within broad limits. In most cases the teachers appeared rather nervous at the beginning of the interview although this was in no case the first meeting with the interviewer. Initially they were not happy about the tape-recorder and the interviewer did his best to shrug off its use as an aide-memoire which could save him a great deal of note-writing and meant that he would be able to get down to a true version of what had been said at his leisure. This was of course true but it did not indicate to the respondent the hours of painstaking work which would be needed to transcribe a verbatim report of the interview, nor the additional hours of analysis as nuances were examined and attitudes probed. However, the tape-recorder seemed soon to be forgotten and in most cases conversation flowed throughout the period: a second interview was possible in almost every case and this was particularly valuable in that relationships were easier from the start and a fund of common understanding had already been built up. Recapitulation occurred and confirmation of points was possible: generally this revealed a deal of consistency in the attitudes and opinions of witnesses.

There can be little doubt that once 'the ice had been broken' respondents wanted to 'do well' and to state their opinions clearly and logically. Initially there was a nagging concern that witnesses would be inclined to say what they thought was expected of them and this in itself could form an interesting area of study.<sup>23</sup> The fact that the researcher had himself spent fifteen years as a classroom teacher must have meant that his response to the witnesses' statements would have betrayed his own professional socialisation<sup>24</sup> and perhaps encouraged them to follow one line of answering rather than another. This relates to conventional wisdom concerning classroom knowledge so effectively

described by Reddie,<sup>25</sup> particularly as it applies to the 'teacher context'.

The interviews conducted with non-teacher respondents have not been tape-recorded but this has not been much of a drawback because in many cases it has been a factual basis to their opinions which has been sought and frequently handouts have been made available by those interviewed. As far as attitudes are concerned it has seldom been necessary to reflect at length upon nuances of meaning because their views about 'deprived' people have come through so forcibly that there has been small difficulty in writing up a reliable version of what has been said. Their attitudes to the researcher too have been very different from the attitudes of the teacher-respondents: never has there been a trace of nervousness or uncertainty at the beginning of these interviews and, in general, it can be said that the conservative or, much less frequently, the liberal line being pursued has tended to be offered in a most forthright way.

A considerable number of telephone conversations have taken place during this research project; the majority have been short calls to arrange interviews or to check on some point of fact, but only those which might be termed interviews are included in the chronology shown in Figure I. The latter would involve a sustained discussion about some aspect of the topic of deprivation and would normally last well over fifteen minutes. It is interesting to reflect upon the effectiveness of interviews conducted over the telephone. Clearly it is necessary for the interviewer to be seated in reasonable comfort, without immediate distractions and able to write, with notes made in preparation in front of him: the respondent too needs to be in the right circumstances. Telephone interviews have usually arisen when it has proved impossible to arrange a suitable time and place for a meeting and in most cases it has been a question of phoning back at a given time after an initial call.

The most unfortunate telephone interview occurred on 25 June 1975 (see Figure I) when the County Educational Psychologist phoned in response to a letter of 27 May 1975 to the County Education Officer. It was clear that the Educational Psychologist, having gained contact with the researcher - as it happened in a busy general office, was determined to deal there and then with the various points raised in the letter. In fact it was just possible to scribble down the essential details being proffered and to make some attempt to carry out a coherent conversation, but this was not a satisfactory interview: the interviewer had to perch awkwardly on the corner of a desk and write with difficulty on a hurriedly discovered scrap of paper while all around him typewriters and other office machines clattered and hummed, and the remaining telephones were constantly in use. In no sense was it possible to gain the kind of mutual understanding and neutrality in the power sense so necessary for a satisfactory interview, conducted by telephone or otherwise, in which Meadian principles are to obtain. The County Educational Psychologist had a consistent advantage in that he was able to control the pace and direction of the discussion and, although he gave answers to the questions posed in the letter to the County Education Officer, the interaction process which would have allowed some development of the different points did not have a chance to come into play.

However, it was during this telephone conversation that the researcher was advised to get in touch with the Divisional Educational Psychologist in the City of this research project and the first telephone conversation with that respondent (on 8 July 1975, see Figure I) was most fruitful and lacked all the disadvantages of the earlier call. It lasted only about ten minutes but the researcher phoned from his study at home and found an instantly sympathetic subject who was prepared to

exchange professional backgrounds before settling down to review what seemed to be the crucial points in a study of deprivation. The face-to-face interview which followed one month later did much to set the pattern adopted for this research project: Mr 'Q' was able to give sound advice concerning the few schools in the City which were likely to have a high proportion of children seen as deprived on their rolls.

Something must be said about the way in which subjects were chosen for interview and, as suggested in the past paragraph, there has been a certain amount of onward recommendation; that is, a respondent has either explicitly suggested another likely subject or has given a clue which has led to someone else being approached. In this sense it cannot be claimed that a balanced sample has been selected but it is contended that the people approached have been well qualified to offer the kind of evidence needed to pursue the aims of the thesis.

The early enquiries at County Hall were preliminary in nature but they soon resulted in the researcher directing his attention to a particular setting and it was, in some ways, a surprise to discover that the southern cathedral city singled out for this research project should have sizeable pockets of its inhabitants seen by responsible administrators as deprived.

As a result of the interview with the Divisional Education Psychologist a number of teachers, including heads, were spoken with and two local primary school headmasters were interviewed at some length. One was in charge of a 'good' village school on the northern outskirts of the City and the other was acting head of a school serving what was freely acknowledged to be a problem council estate on the eastern outskirts of the City. The first head set the scene as to what was possible for the child from a 'normal' home with a good opportunity of selection

to grammar-type secondary education while the other head showed the hopelessness, as far as educational achievement was concerned, of those children of primary school age living on the Meadowland Estate. Deprivation meant very little to those teaching in the first school, Blair County Primary: it was felt that it could be applied to a few children who lived deep in the country and to some who had professional parents whose careers allowed little time for family life. In the second school, however, members of staff were prepared to apply the word in blanket fashion to a large proportion of their charges and it is clear that the testimonies of these teachers ought to be heard in considerable detail: the majority of the Meadowland School teaching staff offered their conceptions of deprivation.

The interviewing of others in the City has followed something of a pattern. Clearly the Divisional Education Officer had to be approached and the Education Officer responsible for primary education in the City was not surprised at initial findings in the Meadowland neighbourhood: he gave his blessing to the project on condition that head teachers were not upset. In the same office the Senior Education Welfare Officer was a fund of background knowledge on the physical aspects of deprivation and a clerical officer was able to search out statistics concerning, for example, free school meals. The Senior E.W.O. recommended that the City Housing Manager should be approached and the evidence of that Department proved quite revealing, though it was not altogether consistent with the impressions gained from Census data. The Senior E.W.O. equally well forecast that good value would be obtained from an interview with the local office manager of the Department of Health and Social Security. An Assistant Planner of the City's Department of Architecture and Town Planning dealt with enquiries made concerning Census data and also provided



useful information about the development, administration and political significance of the Meadowland Estate. It had already been established that there was not a public house within the boundaries of the estate\* but this planner was able to recommend certain hostelrys used by residents on a nearby main road - in which much was learned about the affairs of the estate.

A number of chance contacts have in fact been made in the local area in relation to this project and a particularly fruitful one proved to be a County Council social worker with a most active social conscience and it was this person who enabled contact to be made with the City Women's Aid, local Gingerbread Group workers, the City Volunteers' Bureau and the Citizen's Advice Bureau.

Clearly the number of subjects to be involved in this project could have been allowed to grow to a point where the data collected would have become unmanageable using the methodology already decided upon. As an example, in the early days of this part-time studentship interviews were conducted with various educational administrators, including the Director of Education in Gibraltar, and with other academics\*\* than the accredited supervisors (\*\* e.g., Philip Robinson at Keele University and Geoffrey Esland of the Open University) but, although their testimonies may be reflected in parts of the discussion, it came to be firmly decided that the core of this study was to be the one school and its surrounding neighbourhood. The local persons interviewed, although they would often be speaking about deprivation in a general way, their ideas having been acquired domestically, through education, the media and so on, would

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\* This was initially seen as a drawback in that 'the local' can often present an observer with a series of snapshot views of a neighbourhood's social life.

probably have their immediate impressions grounded in the study area.

Finally, some indication must be given of the way in which the data have been processed for presentation, mainly in Chapter 4. As already stated, every interview has had notes written about it and in the case of tape-recorded interviews these notes take the form of a dialogue between the researcher and the respondent. The file of interview reports has been worked through by the researcher and index cards have been prepared for what are regarded as significant topics and sub-topics. The reference numbers of the pages on which a particular topic/sub-topic appears are noted on the index cards and cross-indexing has frequently been found necessary where topics have become intermingled: 'violence' and 'family break-up' provide an example of this (see Appendix A).

Using this method of analysis it has been possible to relate relevant parts of the testimonies offered by witnesses to the five groups of hypotheses set up under 'A' at the end of Chapter 1. It will be seen that the hypotheses reflect differential need levels and, as the evidence thus arranged is presented in Chapter 4, there is a progression from what may be described as lower-order human needs, that is those relating largely to things physical, to higher-order needs reflecting things cultural, conceptual and ethical.

### Summary

In this chapter further consideration has been given to the theoretical basis of the project and the implications of acceptance or rejection of alternative methodologies have been discussed. A chronology of interviews conducted has been presented and comment made upon the choice of interview subjects. The techniques used and interview circumstances have been reported and methods of analysing data and plans for the presentation of evidence in Chapter 4 have been considered.

There are also indications above of insights gained by the writer and related developments in understanding the situation at different stages in the development of the methodology used. These may be summarised as below.

It was hoped at first that something of what was to be observed might be measured and subjected to statistical analysis, yet the procedures described trace a growing preference for the phenomenological paradigm. This may be largely explained by the fact that when the initial research plan came to be discarded there was less need for the processing of statistical data.

Kelly's Personal Construct Theory was examined during preparation for school-based enquiry early in 1976 and insights gained from this study had a bearing upon the kinds of question used in the early interview schedules, though the personal construct grid, per se, was not used.

It has been shown above too how the relative merits of participant observation and interviewing were considered as school-based enquiries got under way and how, in consequence, there was a move from prepared and relatively formal interviews toward unstructured and informal (mostly tape-recorded) discussion, interspersed with periods of participant observation in the classrooms.

CHAPTER 2REFERENCES AND NOTES

- 1 Hargreaves, D H (1967) Social Relations in a Secondary School, RKP, p. x
- 2 Hargreaves, D H, Hestor, S K, & Mellow, F J (1975) Deviance in Classrooms, RKP, p. 2
- 3 Delamont, S (1976) Interaction in the Classroom, Methuen
- 4 Statement of intended research project on 'Conceptions of Deprivation' submitted to the Open University by P Clark, 5 Oct 74:

It is proposed to examine the way in which deprivation is conceived in one local education authority. By means of interviews with the Chief Education Officer, other officials, advisers and teachers it is aimed to discover which children are seen as deprived and find out the provision made for such children within the education system. It is intended to see how these representatives of the local education authority respond to the idea of compensatory education, how related problems are understood and the degree of complexity seen to exist in such provision.

The curricula and pedagogy provided for groups seen as deprived will be examined in as much detail as possible and a close interest will be taken in the allocation of resources to stated categories of school children.

It will be particularly useful to see how the children respond and how aware they are of this official labelling process. Parental response will help complete the picture.

In general preparation it will be necessary to build up a profile of the area and a fairly thorough look will need to be taken at the kind of criteria used by Plowden when assessing E.P.A. status. Clearly I will need to avoid the building up of preconceptions as I make initial enquiries in the Social Service area. It is the reality of deprivation as it affects education in schools that I seek and too much attention to, for example, housing statistics or the proportion of unskilled manual workers in the area could lead this research enterprise along paths all too familiar in the more popular literature of this topic.

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It will be gathered from Chapter 2 that this unrealistic programme has been considerably amended.

- 5 In Gage, N L (ed) (1963) Handbook of Research Teaching, American Research Association, McNally
- 6 The Divisional Educational Psychologist provided what he considered to be a 'league table' for local schools as far as deprivation was concerned. (Interview 8 Aug 75)
- 7 Nash, R (1973) Classrooms Observed, RKP, p. 1
- 8 Ditto pp. 35-38, 88
- 9 Burroughs, G E R (1971) Design and Analysis in Educational Research, University of Birmingham
- 10 Explained in Stott, D H (1971) The Social Adjustment of Children, ULP Case examples in Stott Unsettled Children and their Families
- 11 Kelly, G A (1955) The Psychology of Personal Constructs, Norton. Quoted in Nash, p. 20
- 12 Delamont, S (1976) Interaction in the Classroom, Methuen, p. 25 - more fully developed in Hargreaves et al Deviance in Classrooms, p. 10
- 13 Clark, P 'Compensatory education: the underlying stances and teachers' attitudes' in Urban Education Vol. IX, No 4, Jan 75, Sage Publications
- 14 Filstead, W J (ed) (1970) Qualitative Methodology, Markham
- 15 During the interaction of the extended interviews and in the analysis of tape-recordings, the researcher was able to gain an appreciation, for example, of how the subjects' home lives were rigidly separated from their lives at school.
- 16 Becker, H S (1971) Sociological Work: Method and Substance, Allen Lane The Penguin Press, p. 38
- 17 Becker and Geer 'Participant observation: the analysis of qualitative field data' in Adams and Preiss Human Organization Research, Dorsey (1960). (Original source Polya, G (1954) Mathematics and Plausible Reasoning, Princeton University Press)
- 18 Delamont, S (1976) Interaction in the Classroom, Methuen, p. 24
- 19 Robinson, P 'An ethnography of classrooms' in Eggleston, J (ed) (1974) Contemporary Research in the Sociology of Education, Methuen
- 20 Schwartz, M S and Schwartz, G C 'Problems in participant observation' A.J.S. 60(4) 1955 - quoted by Robinson
- 21 Schutz, A (1967) Collected Papers, Vol. I, Martinus Nijhoff - quoted by Robinson
- 22 Walker, R and Adelman, C (1972) Towards a Sociography of Classrooms, Centre for Science Education - quoted by Robinson

- 23 The 'Hawthorne effect' described by J A C Brown (The Social Psychology of Industry, Penguin, 1967) comes to mind
- 24 The teachers already knew something of the researcher's background: in every case the career of interviewer and respondent had been discussed to some extent at the initial meeting
- 25 Keddie, N 'Classroom knowledge' in Young, M F D (ed) (1971) Knowledge and Control, Collier-Macmillan

CHAPTER 3      INDICES OF DEPRIVATION: WITH PARTICULAR  
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## CHAPTER 3

### INDICES OF DEPRIVATION: WITH PARTICULAR

#### REFERENCE TO THE STUDY NEIGHBOURHOOD

This study is about "deprivation", the way in which the concept is used by teachers and others responsible for the education and welfare of children living in a housing estate which is officially recognised as "deprived".<sup>1</sup>

The housing estate mentioned in this extract from p. 3 of the thesis it will be appreciated by now is the Meadowland Estate and it is necessary to give some attention to it and the primary school attended by the young children of the estate: here is the local context of the problem under consideration. While this is being done a wider perspective will be introduced from time to time as is appropriate to highlight general points about aspects of deprivation.

Although it cannot be doubted that the life-chances of the residents of the Meadowland Estate are constrained by the non-random distribution of resources and facilities<sup>2</sup> within the City's area of administration this is not immediately apparent to the newcomer: the estate has a backcloth of open country, there is no housing shortage and the comfortably spacious primary school is pleasantly situated in adequately-kept grounds. The main road, which divides the post-war housing from earlier dwellings,

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This introduction to Ch. 3 is the author's impression of the neighbourhood, based upon his early enquiries, information gleaned during the field-work phase and, to a small degree, the literature. It is appreciated that other views, e.g. those of the estate dwellers, would enrich the description but these would need to be in a follow-up study - which has been contemplated.



carries heavy traffic and a minor industrial estate is based upon it: the municipal rubbish tip is sited where the main road leaves the built-up area.

It soon becomes evident that employment opportunities for the mainly unskilled or semi-skilled workers living on the Estate are few and, at this time, seldom near at hand. Meadowland Estate dwellers score badly in terms of physical access to the City's facilities of all kinds - health and welfare services, public transport, the public library, the swimming pool, parks, secondary and further education premises, leisure facilities, business premises and shops of all kinds. Some of the witnesses interviewed have made much of the local people's lack of access to good things and the proximity of nasty things<sup>3</sup> though the majority have made rather more of the undeserved advantages they are seen to possess.

At an interview on 8 August 1975 Mr 'Q', Educational Psychologist at the Regional Office serving the City,<sup>4</sup> told the researcher that a clear order of merit was discernible for the City's council estates and the Meadowland Estate was bottom of the league. He made the following points about the Meadowland Primary School: parents were predominantly from socio-economic group 5, the children were under-developed verbally and they tended to show a poor attitude to school.<sup>5\*</sup>

Mr 'Mo', Acting Head Teacher of Meadowland Primary School, confirmed the psychologist's statements about the school when the researcher made his first visit, on 6 October 1975.<sup>6</sup> Mr 'Mo' knew the area to be deprived according to most of the usual indices and health and welfare officials certainly had heavy work loads on the estate. A number of the

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\* An application for E.P.A. status had been considered by the County Council in the previous year but rejected.

fathers were in prison, there was a great deal of 'changing partners' evidenced by children's accounts of 'uncles' sometimes living with 'mum' and sometimes down the street. Single parent families were common,\* most often because of illegitimate births and unofficial break-ups. He went on to talk of the high proportion of pupils receiving free school meals and the large number of estate-dwellers who were unemployed, explaining the current difficulties of the local labour market.

Also during this first Meadowland School-based interview Mr 'Mo' spoke of the lack of amenities in the area generally and for the younger children in particular (e.g., there was a play area but swings, etc., were few and often broken). The rural delights of the land between Meadowland and Fitwell seemed not to be appreciated by these young people but he was hopeful about their response to school-time walks with him to this ancient settlement. There was a daughter church serving the neighbourhood and attempts had been made at social and youth work based on the church hall. The school did not have a parent-teacher association as such but there was a fairly active Friends Association which allowed charitable residents of better endowed parts of the City to help in fund-collecting ventures and in the organisation of school functions, journeys, etc. Mr 'Mo' acknowledged that socially and academically the school left a great deal to be desired but felt that it had strengths and these were to be found in the various clubs which met on a Friday afternoon. He mentioned the choir first, although this was more than simply a Friday afternoon club. He thought the children were lucky to have a keen amateur

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\* Later in this chapter the Meadowland Estate is shown (from relevant statistical data for the time) to have slightly fewer one-parent families than the national average. The Senior S.W.O. spoke of the difficulty of schools keeping reliable records of family state. Yet head teachers' impressions are important to this study.

opera singer who devoted a great deal of her time to producing a good choir in this unhelpful school situation. The normal Friday clubs were concerned with national dancing, art and craft, drama, indoor games (he emphasised how few children encountered the more usual table games), cooking (using the teacher's own bottled gas stove, it was later discovered), P.E. and sports; a group of children was preparing for the cycling proficiency test.

Attainment at the school was generally low and only one child had moved on to a selective secondary school that summer. All the nine-year-olds had taken the County Literacy Test the previous term and staff were sure the results would be poor. Miss 'S', the Deputy Head Teacher, joined in the conversation at this point and remarked how the Educational Psychologist and his team spent a good deal of time in the school and pupils were occasionally referred for E.S.N. treatment. A good proportion of the intake for the City's new E.S.N. school had been provided by Meadowland Primary School and a number of pupils attended the office of Mr 'Q' for remedial help. Miss 'S' taught only remedial groups at Meadowland School and saw her task with her many deprived children as positive teaching, as far as possible on a one to one basis, and thought testing procedures ought to be left to the psychologists as they were time-consuming and prevented her from giving maximum attention to her teaching.

It was some three months later (28 January 1976)<sup>7</sup> that the researcher made his second visit to the school and this marked the beginning of a series of depth interviews and participant-observation periods which have provided the core to this research project. Mr 'Mo' had prepared for the researcher's second visit by reading the first Halsey Report on E.P.As<sup>8</sup> and was interested to see how Meadowland School's problems compared

with those identified in recognised E.P.As. He had also read Donnison's A Pattern of Disadvantage<sup>9</sup> and was of the opinion that many of the handicaps revealed in the National Children's Bureau research project<sup>10</sup> and summarised in Donnison's booklet were clearly in evidence among the children of the Meadowland Estate.

After seeing the Head on this second visit to Meadowland School the researcher interviewed the Deputy Head, Miss 'S',<sup>11</sup> in an initial attempt to discover what she understood by the word 'deprived'. The discussion was structured\* under the following headings:

1. Physical deprivation  
(a) Housing (b) Clothing (c) Food (d) Sleep
2. Maternal deprivation
3. Linguistic deprivation
4. Social deprivation
5. Cultural deprivation
6. Sensory deprivation
7. Emotional deprivation
8. Large families
9. Deprived of medical attention
10. Child guidance

Her responses are included in the data presented in the next chapter and this list of headings is only included here to indicate the way in which various indices were being considered at this early stage of enquiry.

This was the only interview at Meadowland School in which such a formal schedule was adhered to: Miss 'S' took the discussion most seriously and her answers provided a valuable start to data collection among the school staff.

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\* The interview schedule for this session was based upon the groups of factors shown (an amalgam of headings drawn from the literature) and in the course of the discussion the interviewer became aware of the need for less formal interaction if full benefit was to be gained from such a willing and helpful subject as Miss 'S'. The interview may well have been 'contaminated' by the researcher's preconceptions as the different topics were presented.

The third interview on this second visit to the school was with Mrs 'J',<sup>12</sup> teacher-in-charge of the Infants Section, and this was a much more free-ranging talk: nevertheless, it was useful in this early building up of impressions as to how teachers conceived 'the deprived child'. Although quite full notes were able to be made later from the jottings taken at the time, the researcher left the school after this second visit convinced that a tape-recorder would be needed on future occasions if full value was to be obtained from the work.

This chapter is headed 'Indices of deprivation...' and it may be legitimately asked why established indices have not yet been considered. In the early stages of this project the researcher was very conscious of the need to study the indices of deprivation used by various authorities, to the extent in fact that an earlier draft of this chapter allowed established indices and national trends, with regional variations, to dominate so that conditions within the Meadowland Estate were pushed into the background. The following extract from that draft is still important and notice clearly has to be taken of widely accepted indices but it is not now intended to allow a framework which emanates from national studies to control this enquiry into conceptions of deprivation at a local level.

In many ways the City which contains the area of this study would seem to fare well when it is compared with the national average in respect of the usual indices of material deprivation but when the statistics relating to the Census Enumeration Districts into which the Meadowland Estate is<sup>13</sup> divided are examined physical provision does fall short of the average for the City on a number of counts.\*

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\* It is not that 'national' categories are irrelevant but that too much emphasis upon the wider scene detracts from the study of witnesses' impressions of the local scene. The City is too large a unit to permit close attention to be paid to deprived areas within it. The research area is certainly untypical of the City, but it is suggested that such areas probably exist in most cities.

Thus, early attention has been given to the researcher's first two visits to the Meadowland School so that, as general talk about deprivation occurs in an atmosphere in which a great deal of common knowledge is assumed, the growing need to pay regard to discrete indices of deprivation may be demonstrated.

It was after most of the school-based interviewing had been completed and Mr 'I', the permanent Head Teacher, had returned from sabbatical leave that the researcher learnt of a re-application to the County Council for Meadowland Primary School to receive E.P.A. status. The details of this re-application set down below were gleaned from Mr 'I' during an interview at the school on 22 February 1977<sup>14</sup> and it is interesting to notice how Meadowland School and its environment measure up to the criteria used by the County Council in coming to its decision on the matter. It is interesting too to see the different factors thought to contribute to the school and neighbourhood's deprived state spelt out like this and to speculate upon the extent to which they have been considered in this precise way by teachers and others as their conceptions of deprivation have been formed.

During an earlier telephone conversation<sup>15</sup> Mr 'I' had indicated the strength of his feelings concerning E.P.A. status for his school and was clearly not prepared to accept as final the County Council's rejection of the submission made before his sabbatical leave. A key factor which spurred him to re-apply for such status on his return was the discovery that a member of his staff who had been doing remedial work in the Infants' Section had been transferred to a primary school in a more privileged part of the City. The new submission to the County was based upon the position in November 1976, and as a result of it the school came to be recognised

as serving an area of social difficulty:\* it was regretted that full E.P.A. status had not been achieved but this new recognition did mean that staffing ratios could be improved straight away<sup>16</sup> and better resource allocation should become available once economic circumstances allowed.

Mr 'I' thought his testing of the 38 children at the top of the Junior Section illustrated particularly well the kind of difficulty he and his staff were facing in trying to teach these children. The top-scorer in the verbal reasoning test showed an I.Q. of 105, the second child topped 100 but the third scored 98: the remaining 35 children showed I.Qs ranging between 97 and 70.<sup>17</sup>

The researcher was allowed to see the forms which had been filled in for the submission and the following responses had been made by the Head to the County's questions:<sup>18</sup>

Nos. of children in the Junior Section

Year IV =	38	
III =	39	
II =	60	
I =	45	<u>Total = 182</u>

Numbers and percentages of the above affected by:

Broken homes	55	30%
Free meals	61	33%
Family size of 4+ children	84	46%
Parents unemployed or working irregularly	52	28%
Handicapped person in family	16	9%
Having received remedial education	104	57%
Now receiving remedial education	52	28%

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\* Arguments can be raised that such recognition may be seen as an undesirable label and head teachers have even been known to resist the category 'EPA school'. A contention in this thesis is that the term 'deprived child' does not help children so categorised to perform well at school: but this relates primarily to teacher attitudes and expectations as well as to pupil identity and aspirations. If EPA categorisation is necessary in order to gain official help in resource provision objection can hardly be raised.

Information required in the body of the form included the following topics and the Head's comments were as shown.

Special needs due to changes in the housing/accommodation in the area

236 new homes are being built in the vicinity, 168 are to be privately owned and 118 will be Council units.

There has recently been established a site for gypsy caravans and 11 children from this site, all of very low ability, now attend Meadowland Primary School.

The health and welfare situation

The Head wrote of the high incidence of ill-health; physical and nervous disorders were common amongst both adults and children.

The school dentist continued to report on the poor state of the teeth of Meadowland children. In the year 1973/74 the children of this school had lost more teeth and had proved to have more bad teeth than any other school-children in the City.

The Head wrote of the low standards of hygiene and personal cleanliness.

He pointed out the low socio-economic status of most parents; professional parents were unknown, the nearest being when pupils from transitory Service families occasionally included the child of an officer or senior N.C.O. Currently the school had 26 children from 13 Army families, none of the fathers was commissioned.

Mr 'I' elaborated upon the unsatisfactory family life\* experienced by many of his pupils: parenthood was frequently looked upon irresponsibly and there seemed to be little logical planning as far as size and spacing of families were concerned.

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\* The IMA form offered no firm criteria for satisfactory family life and it is hardly surprising that the Head's response in this section was impressionistic. Throughout this thesis the author holds 'satisfactory family life' to be problematic and subjects' testimonies that relate to the topic are probably of greatest significance as their conceptions of deprivation are probed.



He placed emphasis upon the lack of facilities for the residents, in particular the children, of the Meadowland Estate. He specified the high cost of bus fares to the City centre and pointed out that it was necessary to travel there even to visit a doctor let alone the kinds of clinic usually found in a neighbourhood. A few years ago the school had been offered for service as a health centre for the 2,000 people living in the vicinity but the offer had not been taken up. A visit to the library, day or evening classes, the swimming pool and all kinds of leisure necessitated an expensive bus ride and there were only two small shops, one of them a converted front room, in the district. He was sure that the estate warranted every possible help from the education and other authorities and cited as an example of potential local enterprise the social hall built by residents and completed some five years ago.

The Head was most despondent about what the school had been able to do in respect of the children's educational attainment: as well as giving details of the current fourth year (see I.Q. scores above) he related how in the last academic year 10 of the 51 pupils in the fourth year had such low ability that they had been unable to sit the selection test.

It will be appreciated that the researcher had limited time in which to examine the submission forms and only the briefest of notes were possible: the above, therefore, is based partly on actual statements on the forms and partly upon the Head's accompanying oral commentary. He made it very clear that in this latest submission it had been possible to show that for every indicator in which the County Education Authority was interested the position for Meadowland Primary School had worsened since the previous appeal for E.P.A. status, which was in April 1974.

The Head was asked about the extent to which the school managers and other representatives of the local area had been involved in the presentation of the submission. He replied that the Chairman of the

Managers had been informed of the content of the submission in general terms but he was unwilling that local residents should read the detailed information required by the County because, of necessity, it did tend to show the neighbourhood in a less than favourable light. So the Head had compiled the information with the aid of his staff and reference to official sources and had delivered the submission to the City Education Officer for transmission to the County Education Officer.

In consequence of all this the staff of Meadowland Primary School have the satisfaction of knowing that they serve an officially designated 'area of social difficulty' and their task, presumably, has been made marginally easier (or more possible to fulfil) by a slightly improved staffing ratio. Yet as cuts in educational expenditure bite more deeply and other resources become harder to acquire it would seem that the need for teachers, in particular, to examine their views on deprived children becomes even more necessary. Increasingly it has been asserted that with the current cutting back of expenditure certain authorities have allocated their reducing resources more generously to those schools seen as achieving the greatest success, and these are unlikely to be schools serving areas perceived as deprived.<sup>19</sup> However true or false this assertion may be in the case of Meadowland Primary School it is now certain that the education authority sees the area as one of social difficulty. Teachers and others concerned with the education and welfare of the neighbourhood's children have not been in doubt about this but now that the criteria have been spelt out by the County Council one wonders whether existing low expectations will be further confirmed thereby cancelling out the advantage of a small improvement in staffing.

During the interview sessions, as well as showing their views on

the deprived state of Meadowland children, subjects revealed an awareness of deprivation indicators (as well as high status indicators)<sup>20</sup> they had encountered in other parts of the country. Examples from interview notes to illustrate comparisons are given below: they indicate, sometimes in a startling way, these subjects' impressions of the Meadowland Estate.

- a. At an interview on 28 January 1976 Mrs 'J',<sup>21</sup> in charge of Infants, said that it had been a great shock to discover the reality of Meadowland Primary School. She had taught slum children in Bolton before going to Hertfordshire and thought she knew all about deprivation but the Meadowland children had had such an effect upon her that she had difficulty in sleeping at night throughout her first term...she had now come to terms with the situation and felt better able to cope. It was clear she did not have disciplinary problems and she was asked how the Meadowland children were different from those she had taught in Hertfordshire and after making general points about dirtiness and untidiness she concluded 'You know...they look different; you can see it in their eyes'.

Then followed a series of general statements about the local inhabitants. How lazy they were. How immoral they tended to be. How disorganised they were over money matters: generally each household had a 'good' income but the money was 'wasted' on non-essential 'luxury' items, mainly colour television sets, cars, deep-freezers and drink. If they had a chance they would claim every possible form of state aid and, in general terms, get as much as they could for doing as little as possible.

Yes, there had been a few backward children in Hertfordshire but it did not seem to matter so much when they came from 'civilised' homes. Parents there were ready to help a great deal. Here in Meadowland little would be seen of the parents of backward children and she doubted whether they would be of much help even if they could be contacted.

- b. During a tape-recorded interview on 21 May 1976<sup>22</sup> it was possible to hear elaboration of Mrs 'J's' rather general statements at the earlier interview. She was asked whether she still felt there was an enormous difference between 'this place' and her Hertfordshire school - were her memories of the 'other place' fading. She replied: 'Not really, because I am reminded of it so often. I am still in contact with teachers from the other school. It is fading I suppose. You know I can hardly believe that the children wrote so beautifully and their conversation was so good; I think I must exaggerate but then I know I haven't exaggerated. These children are very, very, very slow. I don't think - I've 36 in today - and I don't think there is any really average child that would have been average in Hertfordshire.'

Many other extracts from this interview appear in the evidence offered in Chapter 4 but an interesting comparative point emerged at the end of this session:

Mrs 'J': Well I've taught in London. I'm not a Hertfordshire teacher. I've taught in the back streets of Bolton...

Interviewer: But did you have violence there very often?

Mrs 'J': Well I was a lot younger then and you tend not to notice part of the time. We had the odd case and funny cases stick in the mind, but then we had funny cases in Hertfordshire....

- c. In the final interview with Mrs 'J' (also tape-recorded),<sup>23</sup> on 20 July 1976, a few passing references were made to her different experiences in Hertfordshire. For example, the topic of clothing was being discussed when she drew attention to the fact that she was wearing her 'painting dress'. The researcher suggested it was a wise precaution not to wear best clothes when involved in art/craft activities in any primary school and her response was 'Oh no, not in my two Hertfordshire schools. Well I like to be smart and fresh...So your personal standards are affected too...But you don't realise it is happening, it just creeps up on you.'

- d. In the second interview with Mrs 'Q',<sup>24</sup> (tape-recorded on 20 July 1976) she revealed that she had taught in Cambridgeshire and was planning to return there in due course. She did not see deprivation as much of a problem in the urban area in which she had taught and said: 'It is a very nice area really, I would not have thought there were many deprived schools: although I suppose some village schools might not have been all that they should have been.'

As was the case with the last subject, Mrs 'Q' made a comparative comment when dress was being discussed: 'Well, when I first came I thought they were better dressed than the children I had in Cambridgeshire...but now you know them better you can see their clothes come from jumble sales... and hand-me-downs and all this sort of thing. And they aren't appropriately dressed; their underwear isn't clean and so on.'

Mrs 'Q' also made comparison between Meadowland School, her Cambridgeshire school and a London school which she knew on the matter of parents helping deprived children with their learning:

Mrs 'Q': They could come up with a guilty conscience perhaps and...say 'How can I help him?' and 'Can he bring his reading books home?', 'I help them as much as I can' and so on. But it does not come to anything.

Interviewer: They blame themselves rather than the school?

Mrs 'Q': No, they want to work in conjunction with the school, but it's just a momentary thing again.

And out of talk on the frustration apparent among parents in this situation Mrs 'Q' said of West Indian parents she had encountered in London:

They'll say 'You can always hit my child...if he's badly behaved' and so on; they'll give you the right to do that. I think they know what their children are like really, whether they're naughty or not...

- e. Mrs 'T', remedial infant teacher, was able to make comparative comment on a number of aspects of deprivation when she was interviewed on 20 July 1976 (tape-recording)<sup>25</sup> for, besides being familiar with Scunthorpe and Bradford, she had taught youths in a prison within the County of this research and at a secondary modern school within the City. A general point which arose from her prison teaching concerned paternal deprivation rather than material deprivation; she said: 'Everybody emphasises the role of the mother and underplays the role of the father and I have always maintained that the father's role is of equal importance to the mother's. And even the Welfare State used to talk about the quality of the mother and do you know I found that...especially amongst the young prisoners (I used to see boys of about 15 to 21)...I found, almost without exception, that every one of them despised their fathers. And that was never talked about... I have always said that if you can get a child to respect and look up to his father, if the father plays his role in the making of moral standards they are much less likely to go astray. Mother is the provider of comfort, mother is the provider of food, clothes - you know, the instant comforts come from mother: the long-standing things, I think come from father.'

Mrs 'T' developed this point at some length and applied it to her present teaching situation with infants: 'And I can see it here...Mother's the one to run to, to hold her hand. Mummy's the one who sees them at the school door and cries when they start school and Dad does not figure very largely in their lives except to rebuke them...I think the children who have got a friendly father, a father who will take them out and do things with them and a father that really makes conversation with them and doesn't just tell them off; those children are more balanced children.'

Later in the interview Mrs 'T' made comparisons between Meadowland and the Northern towns in which she had lived and worked, bringing social class into the discussion.

Mrs 'T': ...But certainly there are people in this area in the City that I never expected to find down here, because I came from Bradford, near Bradford, and I had worked in a slum area there in the city.

Interviewer: That was very difficult?

Mrs 'T': Unbelievable. Because I had started...brought up in Scunthorpe which is a new, newish steel town, very much a one-class town: it's working class but not the slummy...

Interviewer: Skilled working class?

Mrs 'T': Yes, yes it's very unusual really, you see, and until I had left Scunthorpe I suppose I hadn't thought...

Interviewer: But Bradford had urban squalor?

Mrs 'T': Well they had...you see it was an inner city school and it was mixed racially and the whites who were still in this area were what you would call the non-coping variety and every child was from a problem family.

Interviewer: Yes, I've heard a bit about Bradford...

Mrs 'T': You know I went from one type of working class to another type of working class and I hadn't appreciated the difference until then; that was when I was first married. And then I moved to a school a little nearer the outskirts and things were a bit better there because a lot of them were slum clearance families who had improved themselves a bit or moved into a better council estate area, more modern housing, and that was a bit better and then, as I say, when I came down here I thought I was coming to something which was virtually all middle class or nearly middle class.

Interviewer: Yes, that's the impression people get...go down South and...In the early stages of my enquiries people could not believe that I would find serious deprivation in this City area. But Mrs 'J' is very interesting in that she was, as you know, in Hertfordshire and one would think that our rural area and that county would have similarities, but not a bit of it she said.

Mrs 'T': Well it depends which part, you see; I think to be honest you would find that any town or city, if you looked for it, you could find such an area.

Interviewer: Yes, I think you are right.

Mrs 'T': Certainly any city you could and I think any town, even a small town.

Interviewer: I suppose that's true, you know York and Lincoln and places like that you could probably...

Mrs 'T': I'm sure you could.

Interviewer: But you see the area of this City I thought I would look at initially was New Lodge because that is an old part of the town and it would have the characteristics that I would expect to find and you could find similar places in Lincoln and York I am quite sure. But moving a bit out as we are here I think it's surprising, you know, that you find things...

Mrs 'T': Well it's simply that housing policy is that... Yes, it is definite policy: which is all very well...I think it has advantages to it, that system, in that you leave other council estates relatively unbothered, don't you? At least the other people paying council rents...the theory of it is that at least they don't have the nuisances.\*

In the above examples supplied by Meadowland School teachers with experience in other areas the following perceived characteristics of deprivation have received mention: dirtiness, untidiness, slovenly and inappropriate dress, laziness, disorganisation over money matters, lack of parental involvement in school, intellectual slowness, violence, paternal deprivation, living in a slum area - particularly if racially mixed - or on a 'sink' council estate created by local housing policy. It is interesting to observe the kinds of criteria which arise when deprivation is discussed in this general, impressionistic way and after a number of discussions of this sort the need for some kind of standard format appears. It will be recalled that in the initial interview with Miss 'S'<sup>11</sup> a firm structure was created by the use of ten headings and the researcher did discuss with his supervisor about this time the possibility of distributing Donnison's A Pattern of Disadvantage<sup>9</sup> among all teacher subjects. The supervisor, quite rightly, rejected such an idea in that study of the National Children's Bureau categories would inhibit the discovery of subjects' own conceptions of deprivation. However, having now gathered from teachers and others many and varied impressions of deprivation it is intended to complete this chapter by setting down widely acknowledged indices of deprivation and making comment upon the local, that is the City and the Meadowland Estate, context.

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\* Mrs 'T' was not the only teacher-witness who was convinced that Meadowland was a 'sink' housing estate. This was unlikely to be admitted by the Housing Department officials interviewed but their testimonies did reveal a generally low opinion of many of the inhabitants.

In his introduction to Socially Deprived Families in Britain<sup>26</sup>

Holman emphasises the difficulty in arriving at a definition of the term 'socially deprived family' yet, with the aid of statistical data, he manages to build up a convincing picture of what is generally understood by 'social deprivation'. It is unlikely that many would object to 'problem families' of the type amongst whom Family Service Units work being so categorised but unless the subject matter is narrowed some will wish to include a vast number of families deprived in all kinds of ways seen to them as important. Holman et al decided to limit their study of deprivation to the fields of

- (a) income,
- (b) housing, and
- (c) child socialisation.

The first two may relate to strictly material aspects of deprivation but objective criteria need to be established before meaningful discussion about the extent of such deprivation can take place: the last is to do with cultural aspects of deprivation and, although Holman includes the readily measurable family size and number of parents, discussion is likely to be fraught with subjective, evaluative considerations. To be fair, Holman acknowledges that even when using the seemingly safe and objective criteria of income and housing social deprivation is shown to be a relative concept: it depends on what is acceptable as standard in any one place at any one time and, no matter how many comparative figures are produced, any assessment of deprivation must involve a subjective judgment. This would seem to lend strength to the main aims of this research project, to collect and analyse impressions of deprivation in an area officially deemed to be deprived.

The stark figures which illustrate the extent to which children in this country may be seen as deprived in a strictly material sense



are indicated in the effective summarising work of Wedge and Prosser<sup>27</sup> and some of their key points are set down below. They estimate that in Britain

one child in every sixteen has been found to be socially disadvantaged...

but there are wide variations between regions; for example in Wales and Northern England one child in twelve is disadvantaged whereas in Southern England the number is one in forty-seven. These overall figures are worth pondering while reading the testimonies of subjects concerning children seen as deprived in the Meadowland Estate area of the southern city of this research project. Mrs 'T's' point above that deprived districts are bound to be discovered by those who look hard enough in any city and probably in most towns too is a valid one but it does not indicate the extent of the differences she inferred in her talk of the deprived areas with which she was familiar.

It has to be appreciated that deprivation is by no means the exclusive preserve of the inner areas of the great conurbations but may be seen to exist within neighbourhoods which are not subject to the usual pressure of urban stress. The point is expanded in the following extract from a paper by Herbert:<sup>28</sup>

The inner city has a virtual monopoly of deprivation in the physical urban environment with its heritage of old, high density housing dating from the early stages of urban growth. Within the present century, however, it is this form of deprivation which has received the most attention and the polarities in housing standards have been considerably reduced. The inner city has heavy concentrations of social environmental deprivation and probably contains the worst problems. It has no monopoly over this kind of deprivation, however, and as inner city dwellers have been transferred to peripheral local authority estates they have taken many forms of deprivation with them.

It is interesting in this connection to recall Mrs 'T's' evidence concerning her move from inner-city Bradford to the outskirts:

...then I moved to a school a little nearer the outskirts and things were a bit better there because a lot of them were slum clearance families who had improved themselves a bit or moved into a better council estate area, more modern housing, and that was a bit better and then, as I say, when I came down here I thought I was coming to something which was virtually all middle class...<sup>25</sup>

Probably few would wish to argue about the general applicability of Herbert's conclusion - in fact it is very difficult to do so unless one is prepared to become involved in different conceptions of deprivation - but it is increasingly being suggested that the concept of 'deprived area' can seldom be applied to any one geographical location in a tidy manner. Berthoud<sup>29</sup> illustrates the point:

...it has since been found that the concentration of "deprived" children in "deprived" areas is not sufficient to justify an area-based approach - most deprived children live outside such areas and most children in such areas are not deprived.

Halsey (T.E.S. article, 21.1.77) finds Berthoud's statement confusing but it is worth pondering in the context of this chapter. The Meadowland Estate was certainly pointed out by the Educational Psychologist, Mr 'Q',<sup>4</sup> as a 'deprived neighbourhood' and what both Herbert and Berthoud are demanding, in effect, is that we examine again just what we mean by 'deprived'. In this chapter already the criteria used by the County Council to come to a decision as to whether the Meadowland Estate should be considered an educational priority area have been revealed: clearly this local authority, like others in the land since the Plowden Committee made its recommendations in 1967, must still believe that an area-based approach is justifiable. Yet, although the evidence collected in this research project shows that the majority of teachers and others significantly involved with the education and welfare of children of the Estate see deprivation to be widespread, the local authority did not see fit to award E.P.A. status. It needs to be asked whether 'deprivation' as a

concept is more subtle than is allowed by the listed indices. With this in mind it is useful to return to the summarising work of Wedge and Prosser.<sup>27</sup>

They assess social disadvantage in terms of the following factors:

- (a) family composition - that is, a large family and/or only one parent:
- (b) low income; and
- (c) poor housing.

The following table uses these headings to present a generalised view and then comments are made to amplify each of the factors as they relate to the nation, the City and the Meadowland Estate.

Broad comparisons drawn from indices of social deprivation applied to primary school children nationally and in the Meadowland Estate

(see the text for qualifying details)

	<u>NATIONALLY</u>	<u>MEADOWLAND ESTATE</u>
(a) <u>Family composition</u>		
(i) Large families	18%	29.4%
(ii) One-parent families	6%	5.5%
(b) <u>Low income</u>		
Free school meals	14%	27.8%
(c) <u>Poor housing</u> (shown as a percentage of all housing)		
(i) Over-crowded homes	4.4%	2.6%
(ii) Lacking basic amenities	18%	24.1%

The Meadowland Estate percentages shown against (a) and (b) and compared with Wedge and Prosser's updating of the National Child Development Study returns relate to Autumn 1975 figures and concern all children then attending the Primary School. It will have been seen earlier in this chapter when the Meadowland School application for E.P.A. status was being considered that in November 1976 things had grown progressively worse, to the extent that, for the Junior Section (a)(i) was 46%\* and (b) was 33%.<sup>18</sup>

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\* It needs to be noticed, however, that this related to families with 4+ rather than 5+ children.

It is from the 1971 Census returns for the Meadowland Estate enumeration districts that local comparisons have been obtained to set alongside Wedge and Prosser's national percentages shown at (c)(i) and (c)(ii).

(a) Family composition: that is a large family and/or only one parent

18% of seven and eleven-year-olds in Britain live in families having five or more children. Five children is the family size seen as critical in the indices used by Wedge and Prosser but it is interesting to note that the Inner London Education Authority<sup>30</sup> sees families having four or more children more likely to be at risk than smaller families. There is a good chance that children attending primary schools within the City of this research will originate from large families, so defined,<sup>31</sup> (particularly those who live on the housing estates at the periphery, assured the Senior E.W.O. on 6 April 1977<sup>32</sup>) but of the 289 pupils on the roll of Meadowland Primary School when the researcher made his first visit 85, that is 29.4%, were found to have four or more brothers and sisters, the largest family containing twelve children. The evidence of the witnesses reported in the next chapter leaves little doubt about their agreement that the factor holds an important place in the list of criteria denoting social disadvantage.

Wedge and Prosser found that 6% of all children in Britain aged seven and eleven live with just one parent and this does not include those living with step-parents, foster parents or adoptive parents, nor children in hospitals or children's homes. The Department of Health and Social Security (1974)<sup>33</sup> interpreted the 1971 Census data to find that, for reasons of death, divorce, separation or births out of wedlock, almost 10% of all families with dependent children have only one parent.

It would seem to be an extremely difficult task to find the number of one-parent families in any one city but the impression gained from

people whose business it is to know about such families (they are mentioned below) is that this City does not fall far short of the overall 10% suggested in the Finer Report.<sup>34</sup> The Secretary of the local Gingerbread Group<sup>35</sup> emphasised the changing nature of the Group's membership as people of both sexes, from all socio-economic groupings and from a wide age-range came to seek help and encouragement in running their families single-handed. Some 500 had attended during the Group's life of just over three years and in some cases the lack of a partner was only a temporary matter: it was seen as important that people in this position should be made aware of wider perspectives<sup>36</sup> as well as to learn how their own immediate family problems might be solved. The Secretary could not report any specific help given to Meadowland Estate residents but it was interesting to hear this particular criterion of disadvantage - membership of a one-parent family - discussed without reference to the deprivation label,\* so much in evidence during most other interviews when the lack of a second parent came to be mentioned. The following are examples from interview notes and transcripts:

- (a) Single parent families were common, most often because of illegitimate births and unofficial break-ups.<sup>37</sup>
- (b) There were sixteen children from one-parent families in the school. The reasons for there being only one parent were desertion (most usual), divorce, death, illegitimacy, and in two cases the fathers were in prison.<sup>38</sup>
- (c) 'And then there are fourteen out of the 56 that are from either...father's gone off or mother's gone off which is very high - including the four whose fathers are in prison - there's only one parent there or there's some funny mix-up, you know, in the social background - mixed marriages or no marriage or whatever...which is quite high really...'<sup>39</sup>

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\* Elsewhere the author has discussed the relative merits of the terms 'disadvantage' and 'deprivation' and concluded that the latter fits better the deficit model.

- (d) 'Well you see the children tell you certain things which one should initially take with a pinch of salt, but when the Headmaster confirms it - you see he has his sources of information, he's got his own welfare workers. You see I don't take anything for fact until the Headmaster says "Oh yes, it is so". The mother has gone off or she has married again or...you know...But certainly there are people in this area of the City that I never expected to find down here...'40
- (e) Young unsupported mothers were housed in a hostel. Older unsupported mothers, i.e., not teenagers, were placed in council houses or flats, wherever possible, having more middle-aged tenants around them, Mrs 'W' said; this was because a good deal of difficulty could arise when young mothers with 'illegitimate' babies were placed among young married couples. When this was done it seemed that the young husbands tended to look upon the new mothers as 'fair game', and whether or not the women were responsive the young wives seemed to be inordinately jealous and friction was easily generated.<sup>41</sup>

The Secretary of the City's Volunteer Bureau<sup>42</sup> claimed that this unit was well thought of by the County Council social work authorities in that it helped 'plug gaps' in the normal statutory and voluntary provision and it had been particularly useful in the case of one-parent families: in fact the Bureau was instrumental in setting up the local Gingerbread Group. The Secretary spoke of the mainly 'decent but unfortunate' people on the files of the City's Volunteer Bureau but would not be drawn on whether help was ever given to estate-dwellers.

Harrowing aspects of one-parent status were revealed during interviews at the refuge of the City Women's Aid<sup>43</sup> and a measured assessment of the size of the problem could probably be best gained from a detailed examination of Citizens' Advice Bureau records but the interviewer was assured that single-parenthood had a will-o'-the-wisp quality to it and could only ever be based upon rapidly shifting samples as subjects changed status, sometimes literally, overnight.

Even so, the Headmaster of Meadowland Primary School was able to report that sixteen children on his roll came from one-parent families

and he declared desertion by one or other of the parents to be the most usual cause of this single-parent status, although in two cases the fathers were in prison. The interview evidence presented in the next chapter makes one ponder this 5.5% of the children in a primary school serving an area seen by many to be deprived when the national average for primary school pupils with just one parent has been shown as 6%. It does seem probable that some of the 'desertions' intimated by respondents might be of short duration and not officially reported to the school: thus it is conceivable that, at any one time, more than the children known about may have only one parent at home and, conversely, some of the reported 'running off' might be simply gossip and without foundation. The Senior Education Welfare Officer spoke of the unreliability of school records in the City as they applied to family size let alone the, often temporarily, changed living arrangements of the adults in the household and the Secretary of the 'battered wives' refuge<sup>44</sup> testified that overwrought women sometimes spent just a few hours at the hostel before returning to their homes and families, never to re-appear at the refuge.

Wedge and Prosser report confidently:

Overall, the proportion of eleven-year-old children who came from a large family or who had only one parent-figure was one in four (23%)<sup>45</sup>

The available evidence suggests that one in three (33%) of Meadowland children of primary school age can be similarly described but one feels unable to ascribe the one-parent category with any great confidence. It would seem clear, nevertheless, that the subjects who have submitted evidence in this project see large family membership and lack of stable dual parentage as major contributions to a child's deprived state.

(b) Low income

A number of witnesses contributing to this research have suggested that children receiving free school meals do not necessarily come from the poorest homes but Wedge and Prosser claim that this index will tend to underestimate the degree of poverty to which the children concerned are subjected.<sup>46</sup> The calculation of free school meal entitlement can be a complicated matter and, as is the case of other benefits, by no means all those eligible take advantage of the provision. Thus, even if the number of children receiving free school meals does lead to underestimation of how many families in a school's catchment area have a low income it does at least provide a reliable pointer to offset the pervading vagueness about incomes so often encountered during this research project. The following extracts from field notes illustrate:

a. Interviewer: Is this a poor neighbourhood? Have you seen any evidence of poverty?

Mrs 'O': Not monetarily, no, not really. I think they have got the money. They've probably got more than us, quite a lot of them.

Interviewer: But disorganisation is it, really?

Mrs 'O': It's just that they spend their money on the wrong things...and they just don't know how to use it.<sup>47</sup>

b. Mr 'S' expanded upon the ease with which the unemployed were able to lay their hands upon cash, to the extent that they tended to lose the habit of work and become unemployable. He spoke of a family who had lived on the Meadowland Estate: the father was unemployed, the mother did not work and they had ten children, eight of school age, and detailed their 'considerable income' which accrued from social security and various supplementary benefits...<sup>48</sup>

Mr 'S' did a great deal of generalising from this one detailed case and he left with the researcher the feeling that this Education Welfare Officer thought Meadowland Estate-dwellers had little to complain about in respect of the incomes available to them. Mr 'T', Deputy Manager of the City D.H.S.S.<sup>49</sup> Office, was able to give fuller details of funds available to low paid/unemployed people.



- c. ...the D.H.S.S. were concerned with making cash payments to those qualified to receive them and officials were only involved with their clients to the extent that they needed to check claims and make sure that the correct statutory payments were made: the representatives of the County Social Services were involved in giving direct material and physical help to clients and their work was, in consequence, much more face-to-face in nature.... Once entitlement to D.H.S.S. benefits had been established payments were fixed and little discretion could be exercised by D.H.S.S. officers...

Mr 'T' thought that with deprived people in particular the psychological concept of disposition was a key factor: it had to do with money and the will, quite apart from the ability, to organise as well as to do with affection and the cohesiveness of the group living in a home, whether an orthodox family or otherwise. He thought that some people were of a disposition which almost inevitably led them into situations which were difficult and, in present times, almost impossible to cope with...appalling luck and circumstances almost inevitably led to misery in many cases. He met with all manner of people in the most unhappy circumstances and he was forced to categorise them according to the regulations within which he worked, but it was quite wrong to say they were all the same.... He spoke of many harrowing cases that had come his way because of disunity within households and thought it was sometimes a pity that only one person in a household could receive the benefit payment. It was rare that a husband took such money straight from the D.H.S.S. office to the betting shop but when it did happen there was absolutely no redress as far as his wife and children were concerned. He would often like to help more than he did but the rule book got in the way.

Clearly Mr 'T' was not able to indicate whether the cases he used to illustrate belonged to the Meadowland Estate but the points he made had considerable relevance to what was reported by other witnesses. The researcher felt it a great pity that Mr 'S', the Education Welfare Officer, Mr 'T', of the D.H.S.S., Mr 'Ta', the County Social Worker and the teachers and other subjects contributing to this research project could not meet in open discussion to examine aspects of perceived deprivation, such as this particular index of low income. It seemed that there was so much that they could tell each other to help lessen the impact of the deprived label so clearly attached to many of the Meadowland

children.\* This final extract from field notes - quoted earlier in the chapter - best illustrates the kind of statement which needs challenging with a request for known details whenever it is uttered by social gatekeepers such as teachers.

- d. How disorganised they were over money matters: generally each household had a 'good' income but the money was 'wasted' on non-essential 'luxury' items, mainly colour televisions, cars, deep-freezers and drink. If they had a chance they would claim every possible form of state aid and in general would get as much as they could for doing as little as possible.<sup>50</sup>

Such a view may be widely held in modern Britain but it would seem to be particularly harmful when allowed to enter thinking about children at school in the way discussed above.

General indications can be gained about income levels<sup>51</sup> in any district by noticing employment patterns and paying regard to rates of unemployment. Set below is a table giving the City's employment structure and this coupled with details of socio-economic group membership within the City and in the Meadowland Estate will provide a useful backcloth against which to assess the remarks concerning employment offered by interview subjects in the next chapter. The employment structure figures, which relate to June 1973, do not reveal the seasonal nature of some employment in the City area and it has to be pointed out that, even at this time before serious unemployment had hit many parts of the country, the unemployed of the area could well exceed 10% of the local workforce in January yet drop to half that figure in June.

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\* A reader of this work has suggested that such open discussion could well amplify labelling effects. It is proposed, however, that some erroneous impressions might be corrected, e.g. concerning incomes and entitlement to benefits.

CITY EMPLOYEES IN EMPLOYMENT, JUNE 1973<sup>52</sup>

	<u>Total</u> (thousands)	<u>% female</u>
Gas, electricity and water	0.1	0
Construction	1.2	8.3
Primary industries	1.6	43.8
Public administration	2.6	30.8
Miscellaneous services (excluding private domestic service)	3.0	46.6
Manufacturing industries	3.4	29.4
Distributive trades	4.6	56.5
Other service industries (transport and communication; insurance, banking, finance and business services; professional and scientific services)	12.0	55.0
	<hr/> 28.5 <hr/>	<hr/> 46.7% <hr/>

Source: Department of Employment (Stats C6)

(\* The Census shows female economic activity in the City to be marginally less than for GB as a whole, i.e., 97 as against 100)

Using collapsed socio-economic categories the socio-economic status of the City's residents, as assessed in the 1971 Census, is shown as follows:<sup>53</sup>

S.E.C.	1 = professional workers, employers, managers	-	12.4%
	2 = skilled manual workers	-	19.8%
	3 = semi-skilled manual, intermediate non-manual	-	44.6%
	4 = unskilled workers, armed forces, indefinite	-	25.1%

Using the same collapsed categories the 1971 10% Census gives the following socio-economic statuses to the residents of the Meadowland Estate:

S.E.G. 1 = 7.7%  
 2 = 26.9%  
 3 = 37.2%  
 4 = 28.2%

8.9% of the workers  
 in this sample were  
 unemployed at this  
 time. \*

After hearing the evidence of subjects interviewed<sup>54</sup> it was surprising to learn from the 1971 Census returns that as many as 7.7% of the working population of the Estate were placed in S.E.G. 1 and that 26.9% were skilled manual workers; however, the unemployment figure of almost 9%, which must have seemed extremely high for 1971, better fitted the picture which grows from the number of children entitled to free school meals.<sup>55</sup>

Some 14% of all eleven-year-olds in the country belong to households having a low enough income to justify their receiving free school meals.<sup>56</sup> In the City with which this research project is concerned 13.4% of the 7,580 children on the rolls of junior schools in October 1976, were entitled to free meals but proportionately fewer of the 1,475 infants stayed or qualified for free meals and the percentage was reduced to 11.3 when they were taken into account.<sup>57</sup> 80 of the 289 pupils on roll at Meadowland Primary School, that is 27.8%, were able to have free meals and, perhaps significantly, the infants stayed in similar proportions to the juniors.

Various local officials have talked about the incomes of people living in the City and the Housing Manager and his Lettings Officer were fairly typical in their opinion that residents of the Council estates at the edge of the City earned enough for 'a decent life' if only they

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\* It is, of course, unconventional to class 'intermediate non-manual' with 'semi-skilled manual' and it is interesting to speculate what would be the effect of disaggregation. It would be simple to change the Census figures back to normal form but very difficult to do a similar exercise with the City Central Area Study figures.

managed their affairs properly. It was acknowledged, however, that with the lack of opportunity which existed in other areas where there was more manufacturing industry,<sup>59</sup> local people were frequently not well paid. It was felt though that the liberal way in which rent rebates were made available offset this disadvantage to a considerable extent: on this point it is useful to recall the particular care which is needed when taking rent into consideration while assessing incomes.<sup>60</sup> As shown above, some subjects included factual data about incomes in their evidence but, as in the case of the Housing Manager, it was sometimes difficult to separate fact from opinion.

(c) Poor housing

Where there is a living density of more than 1.5 persons to a room then that dwelling is, in the view of the National Children's Bureau, overcrowded and inadequate for growing children; equally well, it is also deemed to be inadequate if there is not a hot water supply.

Of seven and eleven-year-olds in Britain 18% live in overcrowded homes and 9% do not have direct access to taps producing hot water.

In the City of this study the average density of occupation is 0.45 persons per room and this varies between owner-occupiers, who have 0.49 persons per room, and Council tenants, who average 0.70 persons per room. This shows that overcrowding is hardly likely to be a problem in the area and an analysis of 1971 Census returns for enumeration districts which form the catchment area for Meadowland School<sup>61</sup> shows that the average occupation density is 0.66 persons per room. It can be seen that, although individual cases of overcrowding are reported in the next chapter, not many of the Meadowland children are likely to be at risk in this respect: in fact, just fourteen houses in the catchment area were shown to accommodate in excess of 1.5 persons

per room, that is 2.58% of all dwellings in the neighbourhood - remembering the mean for England and Wales is 4.4%.

The following is extracted from notes made after an interview with the City Housing Manager and his Lettings Officer:

They seemed defensive about overcrowding and made it clear that the Department would never knowingly sanction standards that infringed the 1936 Public Health Act and the key bother related to the requirement that more than three children under ten years of age should not sleep in the same room and that over ten the sexes had to be separated for sleeping purposes. The Department could not prevent, e.g., the dining room being used as a bedroom and the number and relationships of people living in any one house could hardly be checked on constantly... there was no reason for such overcrowding (i.e., more than 1.5 persons per room) to take place in the City if tenants would be completely honest about the people living in their houses and if they would make sensible arrangements for sleeping - and be, in many cases, far more respectable.<sup>62</sup>

This interview and the evidence of other subjects questioned made one seriously doubt the reliability of the 1971 Census returns in respect of overcrowding.

In 1971 16.9% of the dwellings of the City lacked one or other of the basic amenities of hot water, bath (or shower) and inside water closet:<sup>63</sup> this compared with 18% for England and Wales. Homes in the Meadowland Estate were shown to be deficient in this way as follows: 6.86% were without hot water, 7.45% lacked a bath and 9.8% did not have an inside W.C. These percentages total 24.11 but allowing for overlap it is unlikely that Meadowland children would encounter such deficiencies more often than children do throughout the country. These 1971 Census revelations make it seem necessary to quote further from the notes of the Housing Department interview. It is, of course, possible that the picture had changed during the five years which had elapsed between the Census and the interview.

Mr Bb and Mrs W spoke with some pride about the standard of construction of most of the Council's houses: many conformed to the Parker-Morris Standard and even the older dwellings were generally most soundly built. Outside lavatories were unknown as were houses without bathrooms; every house had some means of water-heating, even if only by back-boiler - which they agreed was the most inefficient and expensive as far as fuel was concerned - and in most cases there was an alternative water-heating device, usually an immersion-heater. The latter was used as yet another example of the inability of poorly-organised tenants to use resources in a way that was within their means. Mr Bb claimed that the last of the slums had now been removed...<sup>62</sup>

Thus it can be seen that, although housing provision would seem to be on the whole plentiful when compared with the national norm, the basic amenities expected in a 1970s dwelling would not necessarily be available to Meadowland children.

In an interview with an assistant planner of the City's Department of Architecture and Town Planning concern had been expressed about the condition of some of the City's residential stock, particularly in that a higher proportion of the dwellings in the much-visited central area were substandard than was the case in the rest of the City. Even so, she had little doubt that authorities generally were happy to forget little-seen neighbourhoods such as the Meadowland Estate and was sure this was a good choice for a study of deprivation. She had predicted that the Housing Department would insist that such estate-dwellers were very fortunate with their accommodation.<sup>64</sup>

The 1973 General Household Survey<sup>65</sup> showed the national average for corporation-owned housing to be 30.9%. The City Housing Manager claimed some 50% of all local housing to be Council-owned but the 1971 Census<sup>66</sup> showed 33.4% of the City's dwellings to be in this category. In the enumeration districts which form the catchment area of Meadowland Primary School 56.6% of all dwellings are shown to be Council-owned.<sup>61</sup>

### Summary

Various factors used in the literature as indices of deprivation have provided the focus for discussion in Chapter 3.

At the beginning of the chapter the reader has been introduced to the local setting of this research project and then taken into Meadowland Primary School to read about the researcher's first two visits to that place. Widely accepted indices of deprivation have been gradually fed into this locality-based discussion, each being critically considered for its usefulness in helping towards a better understanding of subjects' conceptions of deprivation.

These indices have taken on a particular importance as Meadowland School's re-application for E.P.A. status has come to be examined.

The experience of some Meadowland teachers in other areas seen as deprived has been discussed and some useful comparisons with the study area have been made as perceived characteristics of deprived children have been revealed.

The need for a standard format for deprivation has been postulated but found to have dangers in that it could restrict or suppress individual conceptions of deprivation.

Doubts have been raised about the concept of 'the deprived area'.

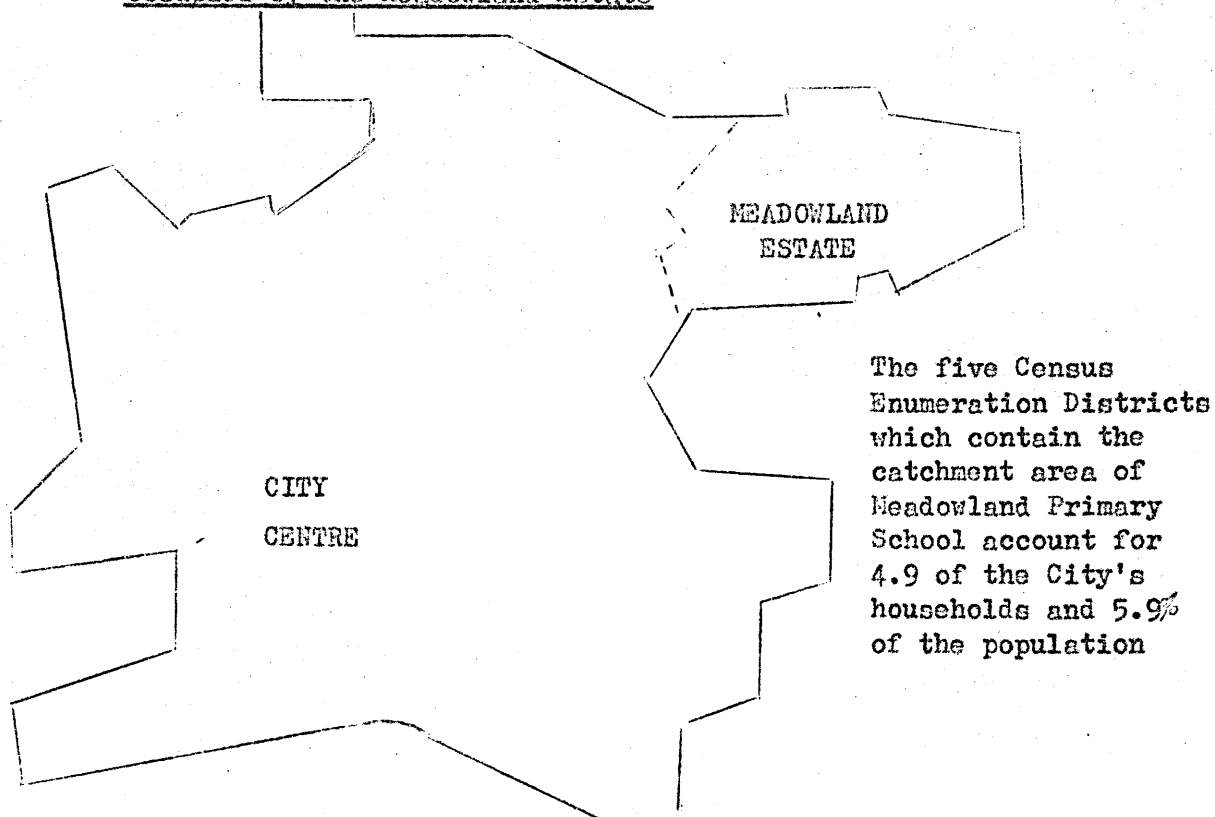
Evidence on the - largely physically - deprived state of many of the nation's primary school children has been examined and local comparisons made.

The scene has now been set for an examination of the broad hypotheses listed at the end of Chapter 1 against the evidence collected during field study.



CHAPTER 3REFERENCES AND NOTES

- 1 Abstract p. 3 of thesis
- 2 See Pahl, R E (1970) Whose City? Longman, also O.U. Courses E351, Block 2, p. 148 and E352, Block 5, Part 2, p. 75
- 3 Harvey, D (1971) 'Social processes, spatial forms and the redistribution of real income in an urban system' in Stewart, M (ed) The City, Penguin - quoted in O.U. Course E351, Block 2, p. 148
- 4 Research Notes 7/1 Mr 'Q' 8.8.75
- 5 As measured by the Bristol Social Adjustment Guide: see Jackson, S A Teacher's Guide to Tests and Testing, Longman 3rd edition, 1974, pp. 138-9
- 6 Research Notes 11/1 Mr 'Mo' 6.10.75
- 7 Research Notes 17/1 Mr 'Mo' 28.1.76
- 8 Halsey, A H (ed) Educational Priority: E.P.A. Problems and Policies, Volume I, H.M.S.O. 1972
- 9 Donnison, D (ed) A Pattern of Disadvantage, A National Children's Bureau Booklet, N.F.E.R. 1972
- 10 Reported in Davie, R, Butler, N & Goldstein, H From Birth to Seven, Longman, 1972
- 11 Research Notes 18/2 Miss 'S' 28.1.76
- 12 Research Notes 19/1-2 Mrs 'J' 28.1.76
- 13 Sketch-map illustrating the proportion of the City's built-up area occupied by the Meadowland Estate



- 14 Research Notes 43/1-3 Mr 'I' 22.2.77
- 15 Telephone conversation with Mr 'I' 14.2.77
- 16 In September 1976 the staff of Meadowland School had been the Head plus 10 teachers (289 children on roll) while in February 1977 (with 322 pupils on roll) the staff had grown to the Head plus 11 teachers and a further teacher was to be allocated in April, 1977. Research Notes 43/2.
- 17 It would seem that I.Q. scores were here presented as evidence that these children were so desperately deprived that they were virtually ineducable.
- 18 Research Notes 43/1-3 Mr 'I' 22.2.77
- 19 Although those who make this assertion are often able to support it with local examples, it is difficult to move to well-substantiated generalisations of the kind produced by Byrne and Williamson with their cluster analysis techniques (see 'Some intra-regional variations in educational provision and their bearing on educational attainment - the case for the North-East' in Raynor, J & Harden, J (eds) Equality and City Schools, RKP 1973 - also O.U. Course E351 Urban Education, Block 6 'Whose Schools?', Part 1). Their work has been developed in Byrne, D, Williamson, W & Fletcher, P The Poverty of Education: A Study in the Policies of Opportunity, Martin Robertson, 1975.  
  
Pratt, J & Travers, T Depriving the Deprived, Kogan Page, 1979, produce an interesting discussion on the mechanisms involved in resource allocation. They have been able to illustrate that even well-intentioned local authorities have difficulty in deploying resources so as to benefit those children with the greatest educational needs. They find that L.E.As need to take steps to monitor the consequences of their own provision. This provision cannot be neutral and it has profound social consequences. Pratt and Travers urge that L.E.As should become more aware of this and check for themselves the levels of provision in their schools and the effect they are having on children and on the development of the areas being administered. They also find that the system of local government finance needs revision and simplification. It is seldom well understood by education committee members, or even local authority officials - e.g., the Burnham salary scales frequently mystify and staffing suffers in consequence. Pratt and Travers are convinced that the cycle of deprivation is reinforced by the policies and provision that are designed to provide services and distribute resources more equitably. Their testimony suggests that unpredictability and inefficiency would often seem to be the outcome.
- 20 See Donnison, D & Soto, P (1980) The Good City, Heinemann. This work, published well after the research and analysis of the current project, proposes that there is a type of place - the 'good' city' - in which the vulnerable members of society (the unskilled, the large families, the one-parent families, the new Commonwealth

immigrants, the old and the teenagers) suffer less than they do elsewhere. Cluster analysis is used in their examination of 154 towns and they identify a basic north-south split as well as a divide between 'traditional Britain' (industrial towns of the north plus the inner cities of conurbations) and 'modern Britain'. The authors do drop hints about where examples of 'the good city' might be found, but one feels they are largely dealing in composites which derive from the well-known criteria. In Chapter 11 Donnison & Soto consider 'Education: cause or effect?' and with Hilary Robinson, Peter Gorbach and Peter Wedge have made a special analysis of the attainment of children in the National Children's Bureau National Child Development Study (see Note 10 above). The results of this analysis have yet to be published but what is disclosed in Chapter 11 relates interestingly to the comparisons between regions made in the work overall. Even so, there are no surprises about the deprivation indicators used, nor the indicators of high status (see tables on pp. 104-5): they leave no room for individual conceptions of deprivation, however, and one is left pondering whether there are regional differences in attitudes towards unemployment, car ownership and formal academic qualifications.

- 21 Research Notes 19/1-2 Mrs 'J' 28.1.76
- 22 Research Notes 26B/1 Mrs 'J' 21.5.76
- 23 Research Notes 28/2 Mrs 'J' 20.7.76
- 24 Research Notes 30/1-2 Mrs 'Q' 20.7.76
- 25 Research Notes 29/1-6 Mrs 'T' 20.7.76
- 26 Holman, R (ed) (1970) Socially Deprived Families in Britain, The Bedford Square Press
- 27 Wedge, P and Prosser, H (1973) Born to Fail? Arrow Books in Association with the National Children's Bureau
- 28 Herbert, D T (1975) 'Urban deprivation: definition, measurement and spatial qualities' Paper read to the Royal Geographical Society, 5 May, 1975
- 29 Berthoud, R The Disadvantage of Inequality quoted by Halsey, A H in his article in The Times Educational Supplement of 21 Jan 77
- 30 Shipman, M & Cole, H 'Educational indices in the allocation of resources' in Secondary Education, Volume 5, Number 2, June, 1975
- 31 Census returns show that 20.9% of the City's population fell into the 0-14 age group in 1971
- 32 Research Notes 44/1. Telephone conversation with Mr 'S' 7.4.77
- 33 The Department of Health and Social Security Report of Committee on One-Parent Families, 1974. Chairman: The Hon Sir Morris Finer

- 34 The Finer Report estimated that in April, 1971 there were 620,000 one-parent families containing over one million children, as a group they represent 10% of all families
- 35 Secretary of the Local Gingerbread Group interviewed 15.2.77
- 36 Professor V George, author of Motherless Families, was to speak at the Group's next weekly meeting
- 37 Research Notes 11/1 Mr 'Mo' 6.10.75
- 38 Research Notes 17/1 Mr 'Mo' 26.1.76
- 39 Research Notes 26B/5 Mrs 'J' 26.5.76
- 40 Research Notes 29/5 Mrs 'T' 29.5.76
- 41 Research Notes 38/3 Mr 'Bb' and Mrs 'W' 6.1.77
- 42 Secretary of the City Volunteers Bureau interviewed 15.2.77
- 43 Interviews at The Refuge of the City Women's Aid on 19.1.77
- 44 Research Notes 39 Miss 'F' 19.1.77
- 45 Wedge and Prosser (Note 27) p. 11
- 46 Ditto p. 12
- 47 Research Notes 30/10 Mrs 'Q' 20.7.76
- 48 Research Notes 31/2 Mr 'S' 5.8.76
- 49 Research Notes 32/1-3 Mr 'T' 11.8.76
- 50 Research Notes 19/2 Mrs 'J' 23.1.76
- 51 Department of the Environment Census Indicators of Urban Deprivation (based upon the 1971 Census)
- 52 Department of Employment Employment Record (Industry Groups) June, 1973. It is interesting to note that these figures fall considerably short of the S.E. County Study, 1969, that is, 35,000 in 1971 and 50,000 in 1981. The County Structure Plan, 1976, makes it clear that the economic expansion originally envisaged for this area of the County is not now to happen and so no significant improvement can be expected in employment opportunities in the foreseeable future.
- 53 City Central Area Study, Department of Architecture and Planning, 1974
- 54 See, for example, references to the socio-economic status of the parents of Meadowland pupils in the school's request for E.P.A. status earlier in this chapter.

- 55 See Shipman and Cole at Note 30 above. Free meals are generally obtained by application, but in some areas both schools and E.W.Os appear to canvass those thought to be entitled: this would not appear to be the case in respect of Meadowland Estate children.
- 56 Wedge and Prosser. See Note 27
- 57 City Education Office; telephone report of 7.12.76
- 58 By 22.2.77 the school roll had increased to 350 and 110 children, that is 31.4%, were staying to free meals.
- 59 The County Structure Plan, 1976, refers. See Note 52
- 60 Rutter and Madge, p. 16, draw attention to the care with which Abel-Smith and Townsend and others reporting on poverty in modern Britain hold rent to be a special factor in the assessment of expenditure levels.
- 61 See Note 13 above. It is interesting to speculate whether the 43.4% of non-council dwellers are mostly of the 34.6% S.E.G. 1 and 2 categories reported earlier in this chapter. It has to be remembered that five Census EDs contain the catchment area of Meadowbank Primary School and that there is a growing number of non-estate houses in these EDs.
- 62 Interviews in the City Housing Department on 6.1.77
- 63 City Central Area Study, p. 41
- 64 Interview at the City Department of Architecture and Town Planning, 25.10.76
- 65 The General Household Survey - Introductory Report, Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, Social Survey Division, H.M.S.O. 1973
- 66 1971 Census Return for City, Table 19

## CHAPTER 4

IMPRESSIONS OF DEPRIVATION: AN ANALYSISOF FIELD WORK

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III a child is seen as destructive, violent, anti-social and immoral;	
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\* As evidence has been processed it has become evident that school ability/attainment must receive mention under A. IV.

## CHAPTER 4

### IMPRESSIONS OF DEPRIVATION:

#### AN ANALYSIS OF FIELD WORK

As stated in Chapter 2 a close analysis has been made of the data collected in interviews and during observation periods: the findings are presented below.

The following statements, suggested after the literature survey reported in Chapter 1,\* have provided a focus during the process of analysis and each statement is to be examined in turn as direct reference is made to the recorded testimonies of the subjects interviewed and to notes relating to periods of participant observation.

- A. The label 'deprived child' is used by teachers and other adults responsible for education and welfare when
  - I a child is seen as poorly-clad, ill-fed, unsatisfactorily housed, having insufficient sleep, indifferent health and suffering from a general sense of insecurity;
  - II a child is seen as shabby, unclean and unattractive;
  - III a child is seen as destructive, violent, anti-social and immoral;
  - IV a child is seen as having low aspirations, being inept, poorly organised and lacking in social skills;
  - V a child is seen as lacking a worthwhile culture and having little appreciation of the good things of life.

The extent to which all, or some or any of these characteristics need to be perceived for the label to be attached to a child will be discussed in Chapter 5 'Findings and conclusions', when a second set of statements,

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\* See Reference 214 for Chapter 1.

set down below, will be considered in an attempt to explain the consequences of the labelling hypothesised above.

- B. I Such labelling arises out of cultural difference.
- II Such labelling leads to low teacher expectations.
- III Such labelling leads to low achievement on the part of children seen as deprived.
- IV Such labelling leads to less than adequate educational provision for the children seen as deprived.

A reader of a previous draft of this thesis expressed doubt as to the status of the propositions under investigation and so the following paragraphs have been added to elaborate upon the reasoning already given concerning their use.

It is necessary to recall that it is the conceptions of deprivation held by teachers and other selected professionals concerned with children's education and welfare that provide the data for this investigation and, in essence, it is indirect strategies rather than direct observation and measurement that are being used in the attempt to gather together the constructions of these professionals.

The words 'deprived' and 'deprivation' are not of particular interest, complained the above reader, unless a set of meanings can be attached to them and such meanings are logically connected to particular labelling activities, policy options, etc., as well as arising from particular conditions, such as those instanced at A I - A V above.

The words themselves were discussed at some length in Chapter 1, as was the idea of 'deprivation' and its labelling potential. It is judged, however, that the meanings revealed, e.g. in the literature study, are not adequate for the purpose of attempting to understand the way in which the teachers and other subjects see and use the concept of deprivation in the setting selected.



Thus, A I - A V is a framework constructed by the researcher during the early stages of the project within which to set down subjects' conceptions: it has to be remembered that naive questions such as 'Have you any deprived children in your class?' were asked as school visits began and these were followed by questions which amounted to 'What are they like?'. Within the A I - A V framework it is possible to present the evidence of the various testimonies and to move from the consideration of a basic needs level towards what may be seen as a higher level of social existence.

The statements under A are not hypotheses capable of being tested in any precise way (see Note 214 Ch. 1). The B statements are intended to extend and set into a wider perspective the statements listed under A.

Although there may be points of comparison between this study and certain of the earlier phenomenological studies, e.g., those of Cicourel and Becker, the work is thought to be fairly original in its kind. In Chapter 5, when the B statements come under scrutiny, it will be possible to move from the perceived realities of the contributing professionals to a consideration of consequences; but a full appraisal would involve further study in which specific parts of this enquiry, e.g., those relating to teacher/'deprived' pupil interaction, were singled out for examination.

#### A. I (a) Children seen as poorly clad

The evidence concerning the clothing of children identified by subjects as deprived merges with other topics and it will receive attention elsewhere, particularly under II - to do with shabbiness, uncleanness and unattractiveness, that is to do with the social impact of what is described here in I(a) and which might be termed 'primary deprivation'.

The inadequacy of the clothing worn by such children does not seem to be doubted by the six witnesses quoted in this section and, quite apart from the children's appearance, it is clear that concern is felt for their physical well-being when the weather is bad.

Miss S., the Deputy Head of Meadowland Primary School, got to the heart of the matter when she related how the clothing of the children she saw as deprived was 'often inadequate; for example, plimsolls and singlets in the coldest weather. When shoes wear through children genuinely have to stay at home until social security payments or other allowances are due.'<sup>1</sup> She spoke of a Miss Gorton who gave out considerable charity in clothing: this benefactor would approach the school for the names of children in need and dispense vouchers direct to the families concerned so that they could be exchanged for the necessary items of clothing. Often between fifty and seventy needy children would be provided for in this way. Mrs J. Teacher-in-charge of Infants at Meadowland School, spoke on the topic as follows:-<sup>2</sup>

Interviewer: Are they dressed fairly reasonably? Adequately, or...?

Mrs J: Yes, I would say adequately: the worst part of their dress is their shoes. They're old tatty plimsolls - very often in the winter. You don't notice it so much now because it's dry.... Reasonably clean...and turned out. But, as I say, the summer's here and it does not seem important to be warm and dry.

and later,<sup>3</sup> They are not deprived that much with their clothes and their food but they are deprived of sensible, not even intelligent - we don't even expect that - just sensible looking after....

The following note relates to a participant observation period in Miss S's room:-<sup>4</sup>

In fact the blue jumper that Katrina was wearing was seen as rather special by those around her, it was certainly a finished garment which stood out amongst the rather drab and "tired" clothes most were wearing. She had bought it "down town", she said, "at the jumper

shop" but was unable to say which one, though she was sure it was not Marks and Spencer. "I go to Marks and Spencer's" volunteered Adrian beside her...

The topic was aired during interviews with Mrs H, teacher of first and second year juniors, as follows:-<sup>5</sup>

Interviewer: I have looked around at their dress and it seems that most of them are fairly well turned out. What does Adrian look like? In fact I've just seen him haven't I? He was reading just now wasn't he?

Mrs H: Yes. He has a black jumper with a nice bright pattern on it today. He's always pretty well dressed and it's not just surface dressing too. When he gets undressed for P.E. he's usually got his P.E. kit with him and his under-clothes are good. I mean a lot of these children...the top layer isn't too bad but the underneath is...you know...

Interviewer: Yes, and in this weather...

Mrs H: Well a lot of them I think...well, the clothes aren't too bad, but I think a lot of these clothes are bought on tick...because you get a tremendous amount of children with the same sort of things...a jumper pattern crops up time and time again and it's either been bought at one of these parties that they have around here, you know, clothing parties...clubs which somebody in the area runs, in which they can pay so much a week.

And again,<sup>6</sup> concerning Paul in the same class:-

Yes, he is on free meals...he is the sort of child who for about half a term he had a pair of trousers on that were split down one seam, they were split and frayed down one seam and they stayed split and frayed for the whole half term. You know it was a matter of when it started of about ten stitches but by the time it had finished the trousers were hardly holding together...

Mrs T, Remedial Teacher of the Infants' Section:-<sup>7</sup>

Interviewer: Now what about "deprivation"? Have you thought about such a word?

Mrs T: I think deprivation, as you say, can mean a number of things: I think the most serious deprivation is a deprivation of love, isn't it?

Interviewer: Yes, maternal and paternal deprivation?

Mrs T: I don't think coming to school in a dirty state, or in poor clothes, or living in a very poor area and having little money: I don't think that deprivation necessarily stays with the child, or marks the child, I think they can rise above deprivation of that kind.

And later:- ...no amount of good quality clothing or toys or trips out to the seaside - that's all very nice, it's nice if you can have everything, but the most important thing is emotional stability.

Mrs O, teacher of first year juniors and in charge of the Meadowland

School Cookery Club spoke of clothing as follows:-<sup>8</sup>

Interviewer: We have talked about specific ways in which they show up as being deprived and there is a whole list of things, some of them I suggest here. Appearance, for example, dressed suitably for the time of year...

Mrs O: Well, when I first came I thought they were better dressed than the children I had in Peterborough...but now you know them better you can see their clothes come from jumble sales...and hand-me-downs, and all this sort of thing. And they aren't appropriately dressed; their underwear isn't clean and so on.

Interviewer: Inadequate clothing shows in winter-time when it's cold, but what about this very hot weather we've had recently?

Mrs O: They've got more suitable clothing for the summer weather, they've got cotton dresses...no, they don't wear very much.

Interviewer: T-shirts and shorts, I suppose...

Mrs O: One little boy I noticed yesterday had got a very laddered T-shirt, a great big ladder right across it and you thought that if he was yours you wouldn't send him to school in such a state.

Interviewer: They have to wear something on top though I suppose, don't they?

Mrs O: Oh, yes, we insist they wear something on top...Well you notice they go home and don't have baths...

A frequently encountered view on clothing and other necessities was expressed by Mr S, the City's Senior Education Welfare Officer, when he said<sup>9</sup> that there was almost always sufficient money coming into the home but it was invariably being misused and appropriate clothing for children had a low priority.

A. I (b) Children seen as ill-fed...

There can be little doubt about the importance attached to school meals by the subjects interviewed but one witness, Mrs Q, wondered about the nutritional adequacy of the food on offer at school. Most other witnesses saw any lack in this direction as the fault of the children who had fads about unfamiliar food as well as some particularly wholesome dishes. All those interviewed agreed that the diet of the children at home was quite unsatisfactory and it is clear that their conception of deprivation includes what is in essence a stereotype uncaring/incompetent mother as far as the preparation of nutritional meals is concerned. Although the Senior E.W.O. found it hard to understand why the people of the Meadowland Estate did not grow more food in their most adequate gardens, no subject suggested that the parents of children seen as deprived could ill-afford to buy sufficient nutritional food; in fact, it was generally felt that expensive convenience foods were bought in preference to cheaper yet more wholesome ingredients for home cooking.

At an early interview<sup>10</sup> Miss S was quite sure that food was inadequate and it was clear that the school dinner was the only proper meal her remedial children had during the day. Signs of lack of breakfast were common: Miss S spoke of the hunger pangs apparent long before morning break when some children kept asking how long it would be before they could buy some potato crisps or Waggon Wheels, the staple 'tuck' of the school. Contrary to the evidence of other witnesses (above) Miss S was sure the children were not at all fussy about what was offered at school dinners and '...would eagerly eat up any food remaining, including vegetables and gravy'.

Later, after a period of participant-observation in Miss S's room, the following was noted:-<sup>11</sup>

...most seemed to eat the usual cereals but I was surprised to hear that chocolate spread and currant buns were also popular breakfast foods. Drinks varied widely - tea, milk, coffee, water, Tizer, Coke, and one boy insisted he sometimes had beer but this involved a complicated story about his Mum and a pub which had since closed down. Every child I spoke to seemed to take school dinner and it had already become plain from the Head's statistics that a fair proportion of those in these remedial groups received the meals free.

Pocket money then came up for discussion. The most prosperous of this group of four had thirty pence left from last week (and this was on a Wednesday - 1st April 1976) but the other three had only a few pence and most of their pocket money seemed to go on snacks, e.g., crisps and sweet things at school. Notes were made about the lunch period that day and the following is an extract:-<sup>12</sup>

I took second-sitting dinner with them (i.e., the Head and his Deputy) and was given charge of a table of eight young people I had met during the morning; I found the meal arrangements excellent. It was clear that the Head and Miss S were determined to provide a "civilised and enjoyable" meal time for these children, many of whom "never sat down in this way for a meal at home" (Miss S).

A poignant note concerning parents of children marginally entitled to free school meals was introduced by Mrs H.<sup>13</sup>

We did send forms to Andrew's parents...but they didn't fill them in. But we do have trouble with the dinners. They do pay, but you have to sort of take it when it comes...

During a participant-observation period in Mrs H's Indoor Games Club the following information was collected:-<sup>14</sup>

We heard something of Sheila's overcrowded house. She told us of her breakfast that morning - cornflakes, jelly, ice cream..."and then we had five cokes...and we had shredded wheat...oh yes, and then I had bacon, eggs..." Mrs H said that was not what she had the other morning: "What was it you brought in your pocket?" Sheila replied: "Jelly and cornflakes...no, not jelly and cornflakes...cornflakes and jam". I queried if she meant in her pocket and she assured me that this was the case. We heard from other children about their breakfasts and there were few surprises. One child said "We have to have grapefruit" and there was a general cry of "Ugh!". Cakes seemed general breakfast diet - sometimes home-made.\* I asked if they enjoyed school dinners

and they all seemed to do, those in receipt of free dinners being anxious that I should know about them: the motive seemed to be that it was more clever not to have to pay. "My Dad can't afford to pay for our dinners 'cos there's eight of us in the family", said one small girl to be interrupted by a boy with "...that's ten people, and there'll be Uncle Cliff and Pete when they come out of prison and that will be twelve".

(\* The children's limited evidence on this ran counter to that of most staff witnesses - i.e. re home-made cakes. This is an interesting example of cultural difference - cakes for breakfast being quite usual in northern Europe.)

Participant-observation continued in Mrs O's Cookery Club. Fourth year pupils had first claim for membership of this very popular club as it was their last chance to take part in this important activity - especially so for children from this neighbourhood.<sup>15</sup> The children in the club prepare a variety of meals not requiring the use of an oven and it is clear that members of staff see this as a positive measure, though small in scale, against one of the basic forms of deprivation.

Mrs J contributed to the topic in the following dialogue:-<sup>16</sup>

Interviewer: So they're short of sleep but what about food. Do you think they get enough to eat at home?

Mrs J: Well they get the wrong sort, don't they? They don't get the fresh fruit and the vegetables.

Interviewer: Lots are on free meals are they?

Mrs J: About a third I think.

Interviewer: So they get a good stodgy - er - substantial meal...

Mrs J: They have good school dinners. She's pretty good (i.e., Miss E, Cook Supervisor) ...we've had salad twice this week.

Interviewer: So...they get enough to eat but you say it's not the right sort of balanced diet.

Mrs J: Well, they don't get chips any more because they're too dear but they live on crisps and pop and biscuits. This is another thing about this school, the free dinners come with ten pence for a packet of crisps and a packet of nuts: five more pence and they would have a school dinner. It's no use educating...it's the parents who are at fault.

Later Mrs J spoke of a boy, Julian, as follows:-<sup>17</sup>

He brings his money in nine p's and twelve p's: you see his mother can't get free dinners because she must be on ...well she gets the widows' pension and so much money through social security. I was a bit concerned about him but you see there again the weather's better.

In response to the suggestion that he did not seem unduly distressed, she continued:-

He was at the time...but things are better a little bit for Julian. I was very concerned March and April because he was coming late, he was dirty, he was hungry: a real ragamuffin sort of...tired, very tired.

Mrs Q contributed:-<sup>18</sup>

Interviewer: But you reckon, generally, they are not hungry?

Mrs Q: They don't get breakfast...they get the wrong sort of food...crisps...or their first meal is the crisps at school break.

Later her Cookery Club came into the conversation:-

Interviewer: Cookery doesn't look very special does it, the way you have to do it?

Mrs Q: No, I haven't got anything for that...I haven't got an oven...I try to avoid things that involve ovens. I think schools are going to be allowed one, junior schools that is.

Interviewer: They just mix up the stuff and that's it - like fudge and things?

Mrs Q: Yes. But we do cook over heat though not in an oven. We do occasionally use the kitchen ovens.

Interviewer: Well what sort of heat do you usually use?

Mrs Q: Well I've got a gas burner today. It's my own...But they need this sort of thing, they're going to have to do it; it's the sort of thing they're going to have to do. Well I daresay they can go home now and their parents aren't indoors and they are expected to get themselves a bit of something to eat. Well you know they are because when I said we would make sandwiches one week they all said "We can do those anyway"...but they don't know what decent sandwiches are.

There followed a discussion of standards and eating habits which is reported later in this chapter. She commented that they were reluctant



to eat anything they hadn't seen before, to test out anything new as far as food dishes were concerned.\*

At a later meeting with Mrs J<sup>19</sup> free school meals were touched upon and she said:-

There's a very high proportion. There's a lot of dodgers, but that's another story. A lot of them have no right to be on free dinners.

Picking up the conversation a little further on:-

Interviewer: But as to diet, I suppose it is the only decent meal?

Mrs J: We don't get too much waste actually. The supervisor is quite pleased. Yes, Miss E is the cook-supervisor and she has been here for a good many years and so have a good many of her staff. She's a good cook: she was the star pupil from the Tech. you know?

Interviewer: Was she; you are lucky to have her, aren't you? I know the meal I had was superb.

Mrs J: The meals are lovely, but like Miss E says she occasionally gives the children things that are purely good for them and they are not fond of but you can't keep doing that, you've got to give these children a certain amount of what they like. Salads never go down well, flitched cheese...the usual, well even the Hertfordshire children weren't too happy, they'd rather have an easy dinner that they could just fork or spoon; I mean, children are all the same aren't they?

Interviewer: Do you know about their diets at home? Do they tell you what they have? Breakfast, lunch - do they talk about what they eat at home very much?

Mrs J: Well...it's chicken pie, fish fingers...because they will bring the boxes. And they're expensive these apple pies and chicken pies. As far as I can see there is no goodness in them, and they're expensive.

Interviewer: The mums don't do much cooking in the old sense at all?

Mrs J: No (emphatically) not here at all.

Interviewer: ...and it's so cheap to make things...?

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\* Perhaps dietary conservatism should not be seen as a stigma but Mrs Q and some others did not see it as a plus point.

Mrs J: Quite. You see as a mother I am personally satisfied if I can get in the kitchen at week-ends and in holidays... I don't think they ever make jam or pies or cakes, it's all crisps you see.

Interviewer: I was wondering whether that cookery class you run here might be a great help; Mrs Q runs it doesn't she?

Mrs J: But there again, what can she do, one afternoon...? ...the children enjoy it and it's always over-subscribed...

Meals were mentioned during a further recorded interview with

Mrs Q:-<sup>20</sup>

Interviewer: Most of the kids in your class have free meals?

Mrs Q: I think it's a good half, or nearly half I should think, certainly.

Interviewer: Eating habits? They eat well in school, don't they?

Mrs Q: I don't know, they don't have very adequate meals at school...Well one of them said to me "It's Colditz rations today". [Laughter]

Interviewer: Is it because it's not very exciting to them?

Mrs Q: No, I think it's because they honestly haven't had enough on some days.

Interviewer: I should say the meal I had here today was very good...

Mrs Q: Yes, it varies, but some days it is inadequate.

Interviewer: If they had salad they wouldn't feel they had had very much perhaps?

Mrs Q: No they don't.

Interviewer: What about their diet outside, do you think most of them get enough? You don't see poor little wretches who look like something off the posters by Oxfam.

Mrs Q: Well, some of them are rather thin and undernourished looking and pale, and their diet - they don't have breakfast and then they come to school and have crisps and this sort of thing.

Interviewer: The evidence I've got on breakfasts is incredible; I've got Tizer and buns and jelly...

Mrs O:

Yes, when I come to school at about eight which is when the shop opens down at the bottom you see lots and lots of children going out to get the bread and coming back with sweets at the same time; obviously that's their little job in the morning and that's their breakfast going back home - then cornflakes perhaps, if they're lucky, and Ricicles and things...but I should think very few have a cooked breakfast any time of year: one in your class... one lucky one, or something like that...

The Senior Education Welfare Officer, Mr S, contributed to the topic during an interview<sup>21</sup> when he said that he could not understand why people living in corporation houses did not save themselves considerable sums of money by growing vegetables: many of the men living in this neighbourhood (i.e., the Meadowland Estate) were out of work and gardening seemed to him to be a most sensible way for them to pass the time. Later in the interview he spoke of schoolchildren's meals and the following was noted:

Some suggested that the school dinner was a subsidiary meal, this was certainly not the case as far as deprived children were concerned, thought Mr S. Although many of the children from unsatisfactory homes rejected some nourishing dishes because they were unfamiliar to them they were most appreciated of many of the cooked meals they had no chance of receiving at home. He thought a feature of deprived homes was that they lacked reasonable cooking facilities: he asked me, for example, to consider the number of pots needed to turn out quite an ordinary cooked meal for a small family, let alone for eight or ten people which was quite usual in "deprived" homes. In such places a frying pan and a kettle might well be the only cooking utensils in evidence, any saucepans around could be in a dangerous state and as for crockery and cutlery.... He contended that considerable organisation was needed to feed a large family regularly at anything approaching the level of school dinners.\*

(\* The Senior E.W.O. came near to admitting that certain families were unfortunate in not having the necessary utensils, i.e. it being a condition problem, but the last sentence is condemnatory and it becomes a trait problem.)

A. I (c) Children seen as unsatisfactorily housed...

In Chapter 3 it was stated that, although housing provision would seem to be on the whole more plentiful when compared with the national norm, the basic amenities expected in a 1970s dwelling would not necessarily be available to Meadowland children. Subjects interviewed on this topic generally saw the physical provision more than adequate but often decried the use made of the council rented property occupied by almost everyone on the Estate.\*

An early impression which was to be offered by subsequent witnesses was given by Mr Q. Divisional Educational Psychologist, when he spoke of 'clearly recognisable ghettos' in and around the City.<sup>22</sup> He was keen to point out the definite order of merit of the City's council estates and saw Meadowland at 'the bottom of the league'.<sup>23</sup> Mr X. Head of Blair County Primary School, later testified<sup>24</sup> that there seemed to be little talent in the Meadowland Estate and said there was a policy to put really unsatisfactory council tenants there.

Even so, at first examination it seemed unlikely that overcrowding would occur in the neighbourhood for the local authority was 'rather strict in the matter',<sup>25</sup> and whenever extra unexpected demands occurred families could be readily accommodated in 'mobiles' at Horton.<sup>26</sup> Miss S largely agreed that the local council was strict about overcrowding and there was sufficient emergency housing to prevent this happening.<sup>27</sup> Both she and the Acting Head of Meadowland School, Mr Mo, said that council tenants coming to the Meadowland Estate from other parts of the City did so because of problems with previous accommodation, including arrears in rent.

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" It has to be remembered that physical provision has already been discussed in Chapter 3 and that in this chapter we are concerned with subjects' impressions of conditions prevailing in the homes.

Mr X's initial point about unsatisfactory tenants<sup>28</sup> on the Meadowland Estate was taken up by other witnesses as follows:-

Mrs J:<sup>29</sup> You see anyone who is anything...we've one family... saving like mad to buy a house because as soon as you get here and you realise what you are and what you're in the middle of, if they've anything at all they get out.

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Mr H, teacher of third and fourth year juniors:<sup>30</sup> You know they say it's deliberate council policy to put all the problems in one place; it makes a certain sense but it wouldn't stand up if it were challenged, I suppose, how managers have tremendous powers. It would be, I suppose, on the volition of the housing managers that this sort of thing happens.

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Interviewer (to Mrs T):<sup>31</sup> ..But moving out a bit as we are here I think it's surprising, you know, that you find things...

Mrs T: Well it's simply the housing policy is that...

Interviewer: Yes, I believe so, Mr H was very interesting on this, he had some strong ideas about the policy of the council. This apparently is where people who won't pay rent or have been unsatisfactory in various places get pushed. Did you know that?

Mrs T: Yes, it is definite policy: which is all very well... I think it has advantages to it that system in that you leave other council estates relatively unbothered, don't you? At least the other people paying council rents... the theory of it is that at least they don't have the nuisances.

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Interviewer (to Mrs Q):<sup>32</sup> There are deprived children in your class you reckon, don't you?

Mrs Q: Oh, yes.

Interviewer: Now would it be a lot? Would it be half the class? Or would it be just a few...?

Mrs Q: No, it would be the majority...Yes, there's something wrong with every family... Well, you don't realise it at first, but then you discover certain little things about each family and you realise...oh, that's why they are here...really.

Interviewer: You mean, why they live in this area?

Mrs Q: Yes, why they live in this area. You think to yourself that they're a nice little family and so on and then something crops up and you find out some little gem of information and you think well that's why they're here.

Interviewer: So really, if everyone here is like this then you haven't got any group to compare them with - although some are more [deprived] than others, I suppose?

Mrs Q: Some are more obviously deprived, yes.

Later Mrs Q said:-<sup>33</sup>

In fact the ones that are very family-tied seem too tied down to the area and perhaps deserve to escape from it to give themselves a fresh start.

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The Senior Education Welfare Officer<sup>34</sup> confirmed what had been said by other respondents that the Meadowland Estate was where the least satisfactory corporation tenants tended to be found and assured me that he could tell of many cases to illustrate this.

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Mrs X, Assistant Planner,<sup>35</sup> knew of the Meadowland Estate and thought it was a good choice for a study of deprivation - but there was a need to receive with caution the tales of near-idyllic housing accommodation.

Although 'official' overcrowding may not readily be discovered in this neighbourhood and the evidence from the Housing Department shown in Chapter 3 does rather suggest that it is difficult to check up on sleeping arrangements, clearly family size must be considered when housing is being discussed.

It has already been disclosed that many children of Meadowland Primary School belong to large families and in fact 18 per cent of the roll had four or more brothers and sisters in January, 1976.<sup>36</sup> However satisfactory the official figures concerning occupancy may be for this neighbourhood there is plenty of evidence in the field notes to indicate crowded living conditions.

It was clear that five or six brothers or sisters was quite normal within the group. Dogs and other pets were frequently spoken of as if they were members of family...<sup>37</sup>

The lad with us at this time claimed he had five sisters and two brothers, two babies, twins and someone who was fifteen... then he amended this to say there used to be eleven...three of them had got married...they used to live in one big house but since "the others have moved we have lived in a small house". He still slept in a room with two brothers, aged 12 and 15..."He can't stop leaving me alone" he complained of one brother and insisted they got rough sometimes...<sup>38</sup>

And, concerning another boy:-

He went on to say how Auntie Lorna and Uncle Ken had to sleep in his bed. Apparently he slept in the same bed as this younger boy, Leslie, and it was "rather a squash" he told me quite happily. Mrs H asked how many bedrooms they had and the answer came as three and that his father and mother slept in one room, Auntie Lorna and Uncle Ken in another, and in the third room - "the other little room" - slept six children. There were three beds in this room.<sup>39</sup>

It later became clear that, as far as the teachers were concerned, the children's stories of large families and cramped living conditions did need to be treated with caution. This is illustrated in the following dialogue:-<sup>40</sup>

Interviewer (to Mr H): Norman has a vast family, doesn't he?

Mr H: No, not at home he doesn't.

Interviewer: Oh, I see, his true sisters live with Mum, and then another sister lives with an aunt somewhere else in the City?

Mr H: Yes, they all came up last year...

The researcher found it difficult to follow the living arrangements for some of the children observed but their teachers seemed well in touch with the home situation. The dismay recorded among housing officials was understandable but there could be little doubt that family size - which could fluctuate markedly during the year - did lead to overcrowding on some occasions.

'And there's so many kids in the families', said Mrs J.<sup>41</sup> Mrs T concurred but thought size of family and even accommodation available did not necessarily produce what she considered to be a deprived child. She said:-<sup>42</sup>

A mother can have a large family and very little money and still cope very well and have stable children.

The Senior E.W.O. had no doubts about the truth of statistics indicating that some 30 per cent of Meadowland School pupils came from large families and, in consequence, experienced crowded living conditions. Whatever the Census returns indicated he regularly visited such houses in this housing estate and, as in the other four estates on the periphery of the City, it was these households which took up the bulk of his time.

All the witnesses made some reference to large families on the Meadowland Estate and usually there was some indication of overcrowding - they were not impressed with denials of this contained in the official figures. This theme appears again when sleep is considered in the next section.

The benefits of living on the Estate were mentioned by a few, for example:-<sup>43</sup>

Interviewer: Is there much for them in play space?

Mrs J: Well, they've got their own gardens. When I was a little girl we just had a little back yard and these children have all got lots of facilities, hot water and baths, haven't they? And they've all got a small garden....

At the initial interview in Meadowland School Mr Ho. the Acting Head, had well understood the interviewer's first impression of a near idyllic setting for this housing estate but he had been quick to point out the knocked-about state of the neighbourhood. He acknowledged the rural delights of the land between Meadowland and Pitwell but was sure they



were not appreciated by many in the locality. He was hopeful of making Meadowland children raise their eyes just a little and to elicit a lasting response from them with the many school-time walks which he took them on to the tiny medieval river port of Fitwell, just across the fields.<sup>44</sup>

A. I (d) Children seen as having insufficient sleep...

Most witnesses were convinced that the children they saw as deprived did not get enough sleep. In reading their evidence on this topic it is interesting to reflect upon the variations in sleep patterns of children which are evident from remarks made by parents one encounters in all walks of life and one wonders whether this could be an aspect of 'deprivation' which is most questionable. Even so, there can be no doubting the sincerity of the views held by these witnesses.

Miss S made the usual observations about deprived children and television<sup>45</sup> (in fact both she and Mr Mo had talked about the incredible number of colour sets in the poorer houses before this interview). Clearly her children had a good knowledge of many late programmes, were usually very late to bed and involved in most inconsistent getting-up practices in the morning. There was evidence that children seen as deprived had their sleep interrupted by both siblings and household pets. Carol, a seven-year-old from a large Army family, mentioned Baby Samuel in this respect:<sup>46</sup> 'He walks and he's only two and he bites.' She assured the interviewer that her only sister kicked her. The seven-year-old boy in Miss S's remedial group who slept in a room with his two brothers, aged twelve and fifteen, has already been mentioned with the quote 'He can't stop leaving me alone', another extract from that tape was 'They get rough sometimes'.<sup>47</sup> This lad had complained in a similar context about his older sister with 'She keeps picking on me'. Then there was the dog, Patch, who was going blind; he slept in the living

room 'But sometimes he comes to see me in bed...he likes that'.

Two boys talked about very normal getting up times then one, aged eleven, disclosed how he slept in the same room as his brothers aged fourteen and fifteen. 'If he beats me up then I beat him up.' The dog in the room in this case was not an active participant as it had a broken leg.<sup>47</sup>

The evidence concerning the boy who had been displaced in his bed by an aunt and uncle has already been recounted: it will be recalled that he had to sleep with a younger brother and it was 'rather a squash' and the younger boy jumped on anyone in range 'about six or five in the morning'.<sup>48</sup>

Television had clearly affected the sleep of one of Miss S's remedial group. She told that this young fellow had the most incredible ideas and he admitted to being a fan of 'Dr Who' and watched all the more frightening programmes. One programme, 'the eye one', had kept him awake for many nights afterwards. He reckoned he went to bed 'about ten, or nine, or eight, or perhaps eleven'.\* He got up about seven o'clock most days but 'at six or eight on Saturdays'. His Dad, a coach driver, had to get up before five sometimes....<sup>49</sup>

An extract from a conversation with Mrs J runs:-<sup>50</sup>

Interviewer: We're talking about five and six-year-olds now, aren't we?

Mrs J: Mine are turning six - 5.9 to about 6.6. They go to bed far too late so they are dragged up in the morning without a wash or perhaps without breakfast: they don't really come to till about ten o'clock. In assembly they are yawning and stretching; not just odd ones, a lot of them because I take assembly in the infants most...and so you've lost an hour there. Then because they've gone to bed so late you might have playtime and they're all

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\* Clearly there was a deal of bravado by the children about going to bed times (as with other domestic information) but the teachers were convinced that all was not as it should be - and it is the conceptions of the latter which are under study.

right, then they have milk or whatever, so they're on to you now but after dinner they've gone tired again.

And at a later interview she said:-<sup>51</sup>

...they've been dragged up to come to school: it's an experience to sit through infant assembly because they're dopey, their eyes are dull...and they don't hear a word you are saying. Really, I mean and I can say...you do say at first when you're new here you say "Come on, sit up", but there is no point of course they're so tired, they go to bed far too late. Now I know it's difficult to get any child to bed when it's hot...and you make allowances for it.

Interviewer: ...Do they get enough sleep? I suppose you would say they don't?

Mrs J: No, definitely not - of the right quality of sleep because some of them have dreadful rows in the house...it's very disturbing going to bed, they might get a good thump to go to bed with and perhaps a good thump to get up with....

Mrs Q had previously confirmed this theme:-<sup>52</sup>

Interviewer: And they arrive at school pretty sleepy, as if they have been up a lot?

Mrs Q: Oh yes...well the things they tell you that they've watched on television the night before suggests that they've been up very late.

Interviewer: What, right up to the end of programmes? ...Well you've got first years, so what are they sevens or eights?

Mrs Q: Right, yes.

Mrs Q took this line further at another interview:-<sup>53</sup>

Interviewer: Do you think they get enough sleep?

Mrs Q: Well, from what they say, no. The way they come to school and say "I watched something that was on at 11.30 last night on the television", and in this weather, the very hot weather, they certainly haven't had enough sleep but then I mean everybody finds it difficult to sleep when it's so hot.

Interviewer: ...Mrs J...said that often, particularly in hot weather, the parents row into the night, they get short-tempered with each other and this can disturb the little ones.

Mrs Q: And I think parents go out to have a drink on hot evenings and come home rather....

Clearly the late watching of television interferes with the sleep of the children of Meadowland as it does that of pupils of many other primary schools: some of the evidence suggests that this might feature more among 'deprived' children than those not seen as deprived. Noisy and ill-organised homes are also shown to prevent some Meadowland children from getting enough sleep 'of the right quality'.<sup>52</sup> The only officials to make reference to these children's sleep, however, were the Housing Manager and his Lettings Officer and this was when they pointed out the need to try and see that the 1936 Public Health Act was observed:

the key bother related to the requirement that more than three children under ten years of age should not sleep in the same room and that over ten the sexes had to be separated for sleeping purposes.

It was felt that estate parents could greatly improve matters

if they would make sensible arrangements for sleeping - and be, in many cases, far more respectable.<sup>54</sup>

A. I (e) Children seen as having indifferent health...

Little firm evidence was offered concerning the actual health and fitness of children seen as deprived although a good deal was said about what amounted to unhealthy attitudes towards more wholesome ways of life: laziness, disorganisation and selfishness were seen to be rife amongst their parents and such qualities showed themselves when the children's health came to be considered.

Mr Ho knew the Meadowland Estate to be deprived according to most of the usual indices and had no doubt about the heavy load it placed upon Health and Welfare officials in the locality.<sup>55</sup> His deputy, Miss S, had come across many examples of laxity on the part of parents as far as medical attention was concerned, particularly among children deprived in other ways. She saw it as one of her prime responsibilities to draw attention to children in need of medical attention of all kinds and

attempt to get the parents to co-operate in treatment.<sup>56</sup>

Mrs J elaborated upon this during a tape-recorded interview:-<sup>57</sup>

Interviewer: How about their health? Are they particularly unhealthy? Do you see untreated physical defects around...?

Mrs J: Oh, they're quite healthy...we exclude impetigo, I've had three cases in this summer term. But we've a great liaison with the welfare services...we had two children with nits in their hair and they were up the same day to go around to their parents. There is a great check at school although they have had their first dental check for three years and out of my 37 I had 28 letters for them to take home that they needed further attention.

Interviewer: Will parents take notice of this do you think?

Mrs J: Quite a few came back but I would say half of that 28 did not return their forms...one way and another... which is much, much higher than the national average. I couldn't believe it. Of course the dental check isn't enough in this area if that is the first they've had in three years, is it?

Interviewer: No.

Mrs J: And if that's the result of it...

Interviewer: It's sad, isn't it, because later on it's going to make....

Mrs J: Oh yes, and this pattern went fairly well through the school - although I had the biggest class. So, if they've sores; well I had another little boy in this class and he had enormous sores but I never got to the bottom of that because he was excluded of course, you never hear....

Interviewer: This is something you never met in Hertfordshire?

Mrs J: Oh no.

Miss S mentioned Sheila<sup>58</sup> and said she had serious misgivings about her home. She had suffered from 'flu some weeks ago and had not returned in any sense recovered in the way that children from good homes did; for example, her nose had tended to bleed on and off and little was done about it. The interviewer had noticed evidence of dried blood around the girl's nose. 'She was skin and bone' said Miss S; 'she had a fortnight off with 'flu and just has not seemed to get better.' Earlier in the same

participant-observation period Miss S joined in when the interviewer was talking with one of her remedial pupils, saying:-

'We have quite a lot of accidents...you know we're careless'.

The conversation moved on to the boy's brother who was in a wheel chair, but not due to an accident, it was some childhood disease that went wrong. Also in one of Miss S's remedial groups was an eight-year-old boy who came from a most unfortunate family: his brother was just a few months old - that is the youngest of a large family - but was deaf in one ear and suffering loss of hearing in the other; he was due to be operated upon shortly but had recently broken his leg in the bars of his cot.<sup>59</sup>

Mr H told of a family represented in his class. The father was again destined for prison and the children were being taken off by foster parents 'to give Mum a break'.<sup>60</sup> He developed this:-

...so that she can get healthy again...because there's a lot of them....

Interviewer: Well, apparently the mum found this lad, Nevil, quite unmanageable at home with father away.... What happened to his spots?

Mr H: ...Well he came up to me and said he had a spot. I found it was chicken pox...and it was at the infectious stage, or about to be, and we had to take him home. But as far as I can make out it was just lack of thought by his mother, rather than just wanting to push him off...she just couldn't cope.

In another taped interview Mrs Q followed her evidence concerning clothing as follows:-<sup>61</sup>

Interviewer: Are any of them particularly unhealthy? How about untreated physical defects, the minor ones...?

Mrs Q: No...though you do notice children have things lingering which you think had ought to have been treated at the doctor's and so on.... They seem to treat themselves by pricking their own blisters and all this sort of thing.

Interviewer: They don't run to the doctor's I suppose?

Mrs O: Oh, they do. Mothers do run to the doctor's much too quickly. Just the slightest sign of a cold or something and they're off to the doctor's...but then on other occasions they let things hang on too long.

Interviewer: There is conflicting evidence on this, isn't there? The Newsons who did the Nottingham study...found...the children of the lower working class were less inhibited, they didn't worry about minor things, their physical ailments, in the same way as the more carefully brought up middle class kids...

Mrs O: They seem to go to two extremes...they either rush them off to the doctor's when a little home medication would help or else they let the things go on for too long. If the mother goes out to work and cannot be bothered to take them to the doctor's then they're likely to keep them off school, or send them to school when the child obviously needs to be kept at home and does need some attention....

Interviewer: You've had some quite ill kids come to school have you?

Mrs O: Well, children that I wouldn't have sent to school, in fact we've sent them home because they're obviously too mopey and ill to work.

Interviewer: Do you take their temperature, or anything like that?

Mrs O: Well, I don't do it: Mrs H (the school secretary) may do it, but...well they go to sleep on you...and things like that; they're really mopey and miserable...but you can tell by the child whether they are putting it on or not, usually.

It has been shown in Chapter 3 that the evidence presented to the County Education Officer by the Head in support of Meadowland School's re-application for E.P.A. status contained mention of the high incidence of ill-health and told of physical and nervous disorders common amongst the adults and the children of the neighbourhood.<sup>62</sup> The Schools Dentist had reported how, during the year 1973/74, Meadowland School pupils had lost more teeth and had more bad teeth than any other school children in the City.

The way in which children seen as deprived were affected by the idea and fact of death was touched upon by three witnesses. Speaking of seven-year-old Bert, Mrs H said:-<sup>65</sup>

He has a lot of older brothers and sisters and he is uncle to several small children, one of which died just recently and they accept children dying almost as they seem to accept animals disappearing and dying. I don't know why...there didn't seem to be an awful lot of fuss about that baby dying... You see they know the child is there one minute, then they know it's ill, and then they don't see it again...Well if you just say it's died then it doesn't mean an awful lot to them really....

Mr H. told of how a girl in his third year junior class took the death of her mother. He would have chosen her as a good example of a deprived child in the remedial group. In fact while her mother was alive she was rarely at school and when she was present she showed little interest. Upon her mother's death, however, an aunt took over and her attendance became regular and her confidence grew. Mr H told of the care shown by this substitute mother when the child had become ill at school one day and he doubted whether the late mother would have taken her to the doctor's so promptly or have shown the same concern.<sup>64</sup>

The Senior Education Welfare Officer spoke of how when sickness, infirmity and death came to the Meadowland Estate the outward signs of run-down houses were particularly apparent: there seemed to be little caring for such homes by fit neighbours. It was as if a kind of growing dereliction spread from the parts of the estate occupied by the older inhabitants and he was sure that this blight must have an effect upon the children. This sombre testimony perhaps leads naturally to the last of the hypotheses in this group, namely, that children seen as deprived suffer from a general sense of insecurity.<sup>65</sup>

A. I (f) Children seen as suffering from a general sense of insecurity

Clearly all primary school pupils are likely to experience fears of one kind or another but in the evidence collected concerning children seen as deprived living in the area of the Meadowland Estate there was found to be a perceived general anxiousness and uncertainty which was difficult to



account for. The adults interviewed helped provide information to elaborate upon some of these perceived fears but their testimonies hardly accounted for the basic insecurity which they were sure existed. During participant-observation periods the researcher encountered something of these basic uncertainties seen to exist among the pupils.

A seven-year-old girl, already quoted, told of her dog Patch, who guarded the house: she doubted its effectiveness as a guard-dog though as it was going blind but she drew some assurance from her security-conscious father. 'Sometimes my dad comes down and gets his gun.'<sup>66</sup> She confessed that she had not seen her father's gun but he had told her that he had one. However, she said: 'I've seen his sword; it's a very big one'. One would expect a kind of scared fascination with weapons of one kind or another at this age and this was illustrated by a ten-year-old boy in one of Miss S's remedial groups:-<sup>67</sup>

In the night...I get my big pen-knife...the dagger bit and the blade bit; I take Mum out I leave one open in case someone comes out at me...I'm not going to get stabbed.

Interviewer: Do people sometimes stab each other around here?

Boy: No. They play around with knives and cut their hands a bit.

Interviewer: What, the big boys? [Giggling from boys]

Boy: I cut my hand once with my little one...didn't hurt...  
I just went [grimace] ...

Interviewer: What, just to see what it was like?

Boy: Yeah...worth it! [Giggle]

We got on to tent pegs and even big nails as potential weapons so I asked if any of the group had been camping and two of the boys said they had pitched tents in the fields nearby but it was clear that it took a very brave person to accept the dare and stay out overnight...they admitted they got very scared... "with all the hounds about...it makes you feel funny...and the mosquitoes".

They asked the researcher if he had ever had stitches and the macabre conversation continued. There were various stories of most legitimate fright; for example, another boy in Miss S's group recounted:-<sup>68</sup>

There was a bull escaped from the slaughter house and it run off loose; it ran after a man that was coming after his car and he ran straight to it and drove off...and it ran off over the...?...then these policemen had to shoot it - it was awful - with a rifle.

But their responses to this kind of experience have to be seen as quite unremarkable and would undoubtedly be seen in a similar light by many children of their age.

Some of the testimonies recorded under A. I (d) concerning 'insufficient sleep' also relate to this topic: the following extract from field notes<sup>69</sup> is a further example of this:

One little girl stayed beside me and told me something of a Frankenstein picture that had frightened her and made her unwilling to go to her bedroom for a long time.

Discussion on insecurity could draw upon material relating to a variety of topics recorded in the interviews with Meadowland teachers: the following is offered as illustration:

Mrs H: Well Andrew is, huh, one of the big problems. He's been pushed from pillar to post and somewhere along the line people keep letting him down, particularly women; he had a fad, a very big down on women when he came here. He wouldn't trust any of us and he had to have attention all the time. And he is one of the bigger problems but he's been under the psychiatrist at various times and at various schools and I don't think he has stayed at any school as long as he's been here. [She mentioned two other schools in poor parts of the City.] And they keep moving him around and you see he never really settles down. I was probably lucky in getting him when he had probably been here nine months. Mrs Q had the first dealings with him and I think he just regarded us as another stopping place....

Interviewer: But he stayed though....

Mrs H: But he stayed, and things seem to have settled down quite a bit more at home and he will now talk to us. We could not get him to talk about much before; well nothing that

was important anyway - he would ramble on about all sorts of fantasy things...of father having big accidents, of father doing this that and the other...according to Andrew...Father was in the last war and he survived a bomb by getting under a sofa, he's been in a concentration camp...he's had accidents down coal mines and all this sort of thing. You just have to pick out of it the things that you can take as being...true.<sup>70</sup>

It is appreciated that a discussion about insecurity shown by children seen as deprived could be extremely wide-ranging and it is clear that the topic will overlap with others to be considered later in this chapter. Even so, the reply of the Senior Education Welfare Officer when questioned as to whether deprived children were generally lacking in affection from their parents is worth recording at this point.<sup>71</sup>

There was often a kind of ambivalence. He illustrated with the case of a long-distance lorry driver who had six children. One son in his early teens had played truant (from the Edward Gorton S.M. School) and this man had on a number of occasions beaten the boy and brought him back to school saying how determined he was that the boy should have his schooling. Yet this same father had recently taken the boy away to the Continent in his lorry, causing him to miss three weeks of schooling.\* We agreed that this showed a kind of loving concern for his son but was quite at variance with the attitude previously shown. Mr S confirmed what other respondents have told me concerning inconsistency in love and discipline within "deprived" homes. Many children from such backgrounds found a security in the primary school but did not always develop the kind of self-discipline required to carry them through secondary school successfully.

(\* The father probably considered foreign travel of good educational value but perhaps did not feel confident enough to approach the school and arrange proper leave for the boy.)

Mr T, the D.H.S.S. Manager, touched upon the insecurity inevitably felt by children of many of his clients:-<sup>72</sup>

He spoke of many harrowing cases that had come his way because of disunity within households and thought it was sometimes a pity that only one person in a household could receive the benefit payment. It was rare that a husband took such money straight from his [i.e., D.H.S.S.] office to the bookmaker's and lost it all but when it did happen there was absolutely no redress as far as wife and children were concerned. He would like to help more than he did but the rule book got in the way.

Although this cannot be related in any direct sense to Meadowland residents some poignant evidence of insecurity was heard during an interview with Miss P., Secretary of the City Women's Aid at the Refuge, a few miles out of town at Horton.\* The general feeling of insecurity possessed by most of the women at the hostel was certainly communicated to the children and the older ones were only too aware of the actual problems concerning social security benefits, welfare, housing, health and even legal matters. The following is an extract taken from notes taken concerning this interview:-<sup>75</sup>

There was a friendliness but also an atmosphere of excitement as the women told their stories and outlined their hopes for the future, yet an equally strong feeling of depression why their hopes were unlikely to be fulfilled. The housing manager, the social security officer, the education welfare officer, the husband's family, his solicitor, or somebody always seemed to be the "baddy" standing in the way of an idyllic solution for the woman and, in most cases, her child or children.

Mr Ta., County Social Worker, had earlier mentioned that among these children were some of the most deprived he had met. The following extract from the City Women's Aid handout is revealing:-<sup>74</sup>

Many of the women come for the children's sake and the effect on them, of a secure environment, is often striking - as much as possible has to be done to break the cycle of violence which often recurs throughout the family tree. We find that the children are very aggressive and have a tremendous amount of destructive energy - to channel this we have a regular afternoon playgroup for those not old enough for school. We also find it imperative that we get school-age children into school immediately they come to try and normalise the situation for them.

It is questionable whether opinion about this particular group of children certainly seen as deprived by social workers and teachers at the local school should be used to test the hypothesis that children seen as

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\* A link with the Meadowland Estate is that Mr 'Mo', former Acting Head of Meadowland Primary School, had at this time become Head of Horton Primary School.

deprived suffer from a general sense of insecurity. There is little doubt though that children who find themselves in this position are frequently labelled 'deprived'. This thesis is concerned with perceived deprivation amongst children at primary school and it could be argued that the children of battered wives are untypical of the primary school population. However, the evidence offered concerning A. III, which includes 'violence', could lead to the suggestion that this group of children of battered wives is not so very untypical.

#### A. II Children seen as shabby, unclean and unattractive

Whereas A. I was concerned with what may be considered as basic and largely physical needs, in this group an examination is made of evidence which leads towards the way in which society responds to children seen as deprived: in fact the remaining groups A.III, A.IV and A.V, are all very much concerned with the societal response to children so categorised.

Dress was dealt with at the beginning of A.I but then the emphasis was upon warmth and general suitability of clothing; here we are looking at how children seen as deprived appear to our witnesses. The evidence presented supports the proposition in no uncertain way.

At an early interview Mrs J told how she had taught slum children in Bolton before going to Hertfordshire and that she thought she knew all about deprivation but she had learnt a great deal more from the Meadowland children. On being asked how they were different from those she had taught in Hertfordshire she stated bluntly that they looked different and were dirty and untidy.

'You know...they look different: you can see it in their eyes.'<sup>75</sup>  
Before this Miss S had put together a number of characteristics in an attempt to explain what she understood by 'deprived'.

Well they look deprived: their clothing...they're not clean...they come from large families....<sup>76</sup>

On a later occasion she was able to illustrate a commonly-found impression that appearance and attainment go hand-in-hand when she referred to one of her problem children in the third and fourth year remedial group. The field notes read:-

Richard had a reading age of 5.11.... Miss S had been quite happy with his progress but he seems to have become progressively dirty and poorly dressed...has free dinner and his father is out of work. Time off in November...clothing clearly from a jumble sale...and decline in appearance noticeable from that time. More recently there has been a standstill in reading attainment.<sup>77</sup>

Many teachers in all kinds of school undoubtedly do their best to see that their charges have reasonably clean hands when using materials and equipment but observation in Meadowland School made one wonder whether a certain grubbiness of the hands and around the mouth and nose were a usual characteristic of children seen as deprived (though, of course, many children not seen as deprived are often fairly grubby). The following notes were made after participant-observation in the Indoor Games Club:-<sup>78</sup>

Mrs H tries to see that the games equipment is used properly and that children do not "mess about": she does her best to see that their hands are clean and that sticky counters are avoided. Sharon Holmes, at my elbow again, seems to have the most deeply ingrained stickiness possible on her hands and was delighted to be told by Mrs H to go and wash. On return her hands were less sticky but not truly clean....

Mrs Q had a particularly difficult task in this respect when she was running the Cookery Club.

Time was spent in the Infant Reception Class with Miss K to observe as mothers arrived with nine children due to start school the following term.

It was remarked to Mr Mo that these newcomers were very well turned out and he said that this was generally true of children being brought to school for the first time - even from the poorest homes. Their appearance made an interesting contrast with many of those observed in the remedial groups of Miss S.\* 79

During an interview with Mrs H we were discussing her pupils in Miss S's remedial group for first and second years when the following dialogue was recorded:-

Interviewer: The educational psychologist made some mention about him.... He didn't score very well when he was tested. Does he look down at heel?

Mrs H: Yes.

Interviewer: I rather gathered so; in fact earlier discussions suggested to me that in answer to the question "What is a deprived child?" the answer could well be "Well that is".

Mrs H: Yes, you would pick him out as being a deprived child.

Interviewer: ...He's quite big, isn't he?

Mrs H: No, Paul's not, Andrew is.... Paul's not very big.

Interviewer: Someone suggested he might be a bit of a bully.

Mrs H: No, he is bullied...he's the scapegoat of the class. He's the one they always pick on no matter what happens...they are quite likely to turn round and say Paul Evans did it, even though Paul might be away that day.

Interviewer: Paul and Andrew go together a lot, do they?

Mrs H: Er, not really - Andrew looks down on Paul, in more ways than one; he's taller than him and he's much better dressed than Paul and he will stand up for himself, and he's rather proud in a way, Andrew, but Paul grovels.<sup>80</sup>

Mr H was rather reticent about giving his impressions on the appearance of children he saw as deprived. The following dialogue illustrates:-<sup>81</sup>

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\* It is interesting to consider why the newcomers should be so much better turned out. It hardly seems likely that the parents would be aware of labelling theory, per se: perhaps it is simply that it seems right and proper to most young parents that their offspring should be well turned out on what is, after all, a very important day to mothers - and a special effort is made?

Interviewer: Would you say that any of these children have an overall look of deprivation about them?

[The researcher acknowledges that this loaded question should not have been used.]

Mr H: In their physical appearance do you mean?

Interviewer: Well, yes, as you see them.

Mr H: Norman and Dennis, no. Well, as you probably know, Norman has only got his father at home, but Dennis's mum, Mrs. Carter, looks after him...almost like a mother really. So, to look at, no you wouldn't, not those two.

Interviewer: They're quite well turned out?

Mr H: Yes, they're well looked after in that way.

A later attempt to gather his opinions on this topic is recorded in the extract which follows and it shows how the leading question is crisply dealt with.<sup>82</sup>

Interviewer: Now what about Raymond Turner?

Mr H: Well I've had Raymond for two years now...this is the second year...there has been a definite change in the last year. When I first came his attitude to work was home-based and his attitude to school work was...well... but this year he has had a go at almost every piece of work he has had to do...actually his ability is very low but his attitude has improved a lot.

[This evidence conflicts with that given about the boy by Miss S]

Interviewer: He looks pretty scruffy, if he is the one I am thinking of.

Mr H: Very.

This effectively stopped conversation about a boy who was seen by others as a walking illustration of the topic of this section.

Unlike Mr H, Mrs J has already been recorded as showing concern about the appearance of children she sees as deprived. In expressing her anxiety about one second-year infant, Jason, she had described him as 'dirty and a real ragamuffin'.<sup>83</sup> Later in the same conversation she stated 'they are not deprived that much with their clothes', although she had earlier made



mention of the unsuitability of what they wore. In fact, during a later interview with Mrs J the whole question of the appearance of children seen as deprived was discussed and the following was recorded:-<sup>84</sup>

Interviewer: Now we've talked about the appearance of the children you see as deprived...they are not badly dressed but inappropriately dressed quite often.... Cleanliness and tidiness, are these things you notice?....

Mrs J: You see in assembly in the mornings some of them haven't had a wash, they've been dragged up to come to school....

Then later, Dirty faces, dirty hands, and their feet, Mr Clark. But it's the last thing with my children washing up and cleaning your teeth...and when you take music and movement in the hall, some of the feet, oh dear!

Interviewer: It's sad isn't it?

Mrs J: It is sad. And then there's another thing, now this is absolute laziness on the parents' part, the boys are having their heads shorn...Haven't you noticed?

Interviewer: It's nothing to do with Kojak?

Mrs J: It's just that oh we'll get it all off. It'll last then for the summer, you know. Won't have to brush and wash and comb and so on.

And she commented later in the same interview how, out of school, 'they just wander and muck about, filthy all the time'.<sup>85</sup> Mrs Q was in no

doubt that the smell of some children's clothing singled them out from the rest.<sup>86</sup> Some of her evidence concerning children's cleanliness is

recorded earlier in this chapter where clothing is discussed.<sup>87</sup> Mrs T

did not think 'coming to school in a dirty state, or in poor clothes,

or living in a very poor area and having little money' marked the child

for she thought it was possible to rise above that kind of deprivation:

though clearly she did see the 'dirty state' as one of the marks of

deprivation.\*<sup>88</sup> She wanted to emphasise the importance of caring for

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\* The reader referred to above wondered whether dirt was a mark of deprivation in that it was an instance of deprivation (of cleanliness) or a sign of a more general (social? moral?) deprivation. It will be seen that witnesses tended toward the latter view.

such children and, like Mr H, would not be drawn on the matter of appearance. The following extract from the same interview illustrates:-

Interviewer: The sort of painstaking woman who will darn carefully and turn kids out well regardless of lack of money, this is the old sort of image you used to get but you don't see much of that these days, do you?

Mrs T: No I suppose you don't, I think that's a dying breed.

Interviewer: Because it's so cheap to replace stuff perhaps now, or is it? Do people just replace rather than mend?

Mrs T: Well usually, yes.

Interviewer: Let's put this as a question. Are there any kids that you've come across who are obviously from loving homes and have this kind of care you talk about but, even so, are turned out atrociously, they are really scruffy and perhaps even unclean?

Mrs T: Yes, oh yes, there are such children.

The nearest she came to a description of squalid appearance was during a discussion of her earlier experiences in Scunthorpe and Bradford but her words were very general as the following extract shows:-<sup>89</sup>

Mrs T: But certainly there are people in this area in the City that I never expected to find down here, because I came down from Bradford, near Bradford, and I worked in a slum area there in the city.

Interviewer: That was very difficult?

Mrs T: Unbelievable. Because I had started...brought up in Scunthorpe which is a new, newish steel town, very much a one-class town: it's working class but not the slummy....

Interviewer: Skilled working class?

Mrs T: Yes, yes it's very unusual really, you see, and until I had left Scunthorpe I suppose I hadn't thought....

Interviewer: But Bradford had urban squalor?

Mrs T: Well they had...you see it was an inner city school and it was mixed racially and the whites who were still in this area were what you would call the non-coping variety and every child was from a problem family.

This passage was quoted in Chapter 3 and it will be remembered that Mrs T spoke of such families 'bettering themselves' and moving to the town's outskirts. Children's appearance tended to improve when this occurred.

In fact one gained the impression during the course of interviewing adult subjects that, initially at least, children seen as deprived were in essence children who in some way or another looked to the subject to be deprived and descriptions often related to shabbiness, uncleanness and general unattractiveness.\* The testimony of the Senior E.W.O., recorded earlier in this chapter, further confirmed this tendency but he introduced the idea that deprived children might also be seen in a poor light by their own school-mates.<sup>90</sup> He usually found deprived children to be scruffy in appearance: as was indicated earlier, appropriate clothing for them had a low priority with their parents. Such children, he stated, normally went to school dirty and were frequently rejected by their fellow pupils: rejection of this kind he was sure was a significant factor in truancy, particularly from secondary school. He gave as an example a boy from a particularly disorganised home who attended the Edward Gorton School; his life had been made miserable 'largely because the other boys rejected his scruffy appearance and claimed that he smelled'.\*\*

This would seem to be a particularly important area of enquiry when

\* 'Seeing as...' and 'looking to be...' it has been protested are two sides of the same coin. Clearly this is true, but the researcher would want to use the former term in a wider conceptual sense - the whole child seen as deprived: the latter term, on the other hand, is about the detail of appearance.

\*\* This labelling by fellow-pupils may be quite widespread but it is not the object of this project to look into it. It is interesting to reflect that children have been found to be very much aware of teachers' perceptions of different children in a class and are inclined (at the junior stage, at least) to accept them as the standard. (E.g. Nash, Classrooms Observed)

examining conceptions of deprivation. It is clear that few would want to be suspected of undue fastidiousness in the matter of cleanliness and tidiness in this day and age but there can be little doubt that the very levels of cleanliness and shabbiness perceived amongst children help assign them to the 'deprived' category.

A. III Children seen as destructive, violent, anti-social and immoral

Like the others, this group of characteristics emerged as evidence was being collected, initially from the literature, but it has proved difficult to separate the material offered by witnesses into four tidy subsections. As a consequence it has been decided to examine separately destructive behaviour/vandalism and violence before looking at views about what might be termed anti-social and immoral behaviour.

Generally the witnesses interviewed (and their views can be widely observed in our society today) wanted to assert that the children they saw as deprived were being poorly socialised in their unsatisfactory home surroundings; they had little respect for property, even their own in some cases; they quickly resorted to violence, as did the adults around them; many seemed quite unprepared for life in 'civilised' society and they had few moral scruples. At the same time out of the testimonies there came an impression that there were within the social milieu being described strong loyalties towards the locality and its people as well as a good deal of real affection within the homes.

Destructive behaviour/vandalism

During the researcher's first visit to Meadowland Primary School on 6 October, 1975, the Acting Head, Mr Mo, spoke of iron drain covers being broken overnight as well as some of the school's windows. He had looked into the matter and thought it most probable that the damage had been done by two pupils of the school, aged five and nine years. In a

participant-observation period some months later a boy in the remedial group for third and fourth year pupils confirmed that such things happened but regretted that vandalism has checked their use of the school grounds.

Boy: I've never been nowhere...I just play around here... there is a play school [ for the younger ones]... we're not allowed to come into the school grounds... there's been a policeman around just lately.

Interviewer: Why can't you go in?

Boy: There's been too much damage...windows all smashed... there was blood over it...a policeman came up [he mentioned something about a bayonet and a rubber ball which was distorted in the recording].

Second Boy: Yeah, he had a talk with us. (None of the boys saw the damage being done but were sure it had happened in the night.)

Boy: We ain't got no playing ground now...only Stonefield Park, it's got tadpoles in it...'Cos we can't play down there no more 'cos they're building in it... always builders there...we are not allowed to go there anyway.<sup>92</sup>

Play and play space are mentioned elsewhere but this brief piece of evidence from the school's pupils provides a usefully related side issue while examining the views of adult subjects.

Mrs J took up the matter of damage to Meadowland School during an interview on 20 July, 1976.<sup>93</sup>

Mrs J: The vandalism here! I think we had another eleven windows go. And some of the windows that are now getting broken are the ones that have got glass mesh glass and they're terribly expensive.

Interviewer: And they take some breaking.

Mrs J: There were eleven yesterday and eleven last week.

Interviewer: At week-ends does it happen? Of course there is no caretaker living on site, is there?\*

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\* As reported elsewhere, it is not County Council policy to employ resident schoolkeepers in primary schools: there is, however, a system of patrolling on non-school days by divisional caretakers.

Mrs J: Not at night, no. There's nobody here. It's sad really.

More generally, during an interview on the same day Mrs Q said:-<sup>94</sup>

Well they don't have very good respect for property in the classroom, really; they're very, very poor at looking after belongings. You know, the number of little things that get broken and misused is amazing. The turnover of equipment must be greater than in other schools for that reason, because they are poor at looking after things.

She touched upon damage to school property a little later when play space was again being considered.<sup>95</sup>

Interviewer: Can they come into the school grounds?

Mrs Q: Well I suppose they're not meant to really, but they do. I mean it's not well enough guarded to stop them. Well I don't see why they shouldn't come in and play football on the football ground in the summer.

Interviewer: No, it's a great pity there isn't a caretaker on site to keep an eye on things....

Mrs Q: Yes, it's just a case of...well things get damaged, which is a shame.

The news about child vandalism was not very surprising when one considered the testimony of the Senior E.W.O. concerning the vandalism of tenants living on the Meadowland Estate. To be fair, he did rationalise the poor regard tenants held for some properties. As recorded elsewhere<sup>96</sup> when 'a general sense of insecurity' was being discussed, Mr S found:-

Houses and gardens which had been kept in reasonable state would become neglected for such valid reasons as the sickness, infirmity or death of inhabitants and those dwellings would become less attractive to be near as new residents moved into the estate and the housing department would push the less satisfactory tenants...into the vacant dwellings...near the run-down houses and gardens. Such tenants would seldom show any pride in their homes and existing erstwhile tidy neighbours would also start to let things slide.... He could not excuse the numerous corporation tenants who arrived in a house and just used it in a most basic way for a few years and then moved on leaving the premises in a dilapidated and often vandalised condition.

Mr Ta, a County Council social worker, confirmed the 'end of the line' nature of some of the Meadowland Estate tenancies and this was discussed when housing was being considered comparatively in Chapter 3.<sup>97</sup> He went on to describe conditions in the City's overflow estate at Horton.

The houses there seem to have been given to end-of-the-road families, mostly seen as unsatisfactory tenants, and the accommodation provided was largely unsatisfactory for the families concerned...there were no places for the children to play safely, i.e., away from the busy main road, and there was virtually nothing for the teenagers to do, except get involved in "bother".

Contributors to the above piece about vandalism will hardly have been surprised to read the following article in a local paper on 2 September, 1977.<sup>98</sup>

#### VANDALS ATTACK SCHOOL

Detectives have asked the public to help catch vandals who attacked a [City] primary school.

[Meadowland] School, at [Twickenham] Avenue, was found to have 28 windows smashed after the Bank Holiday. Damage was put at over £300.

The damage was discovered on Wednesday when divisional relief caretaker, Mr. Ha, made a routine visit.

Police are anxious to hear from anyone who heard breaking glass or saw anything suspicious between 6 pm on Monday and 8 am on Wednesday.

Mr Ha said: "It's pure vandalism. Nothing was taken - they didn't even enter the building - and they picked on the windows farthest away from houses."

Anyone who can help the police should phone [City] 21212.

#### Violence

It was at an interview with Mr B, a County Council administrative officer concerned with Special Education, that the topic of violence in schools was first encountered in this research project. It was learned that in this County, as in others, there were safeguards to see that individual head teachers did not attach the E.S.N. label to troublesome

children who tended towards violence but a head could, with the approval of his governors or managers, exclude a particularly troublesome pupil. As in inner city areas, the increasing incidence of disruptive pupils in secondary schools has been viewed with concern in this County and Mr B described some of the measures taken. It might be possible for the Divisional Education Officer to arrange for the disruptive teenager to transfer to the roll of another school: in the past this had usually been the solution but head teachers were now becoming very much more reluctant to accept pupils rejected by other school staffs on the grounds that they already had their own problem children.<sup>99</sup> Mr B saw less intelligent children as often becoming the butt for other pupils' fun. Those from 'good middle class homes' seemed prepared to survive others' ridicule quite cheerfully while children from deprived homes might show violent frustration and lash out at their tormentors.<sup>100</sup> This is an interesting point but perhaps the dearth of homes perceived as 'good middle class' (whatever the Census returns for the Meadowland EDs may have disclosed) makes its relevance to this Meadowland School-based study only slight.

Mr B's evidence concerning (a) a tendency for heads to try and have violent and troublesome children transferred to E.S.N. schools and (b) the propensity for E.S.N. children to become violent in the normal school situation was recalled when Mr Mo and his deputy, Miss S, were being interviewed on 6 October, 1975.<sup>101</sup>

Meadowland provided a good proportion of the intake for the City's new E.S.N. school but it is now full and schools have to deal with such children by themselves - except, that is, for a very few special cases who may attend the educational psychologist's office for remedial help.

A belief that children seen as deprived are of low ability has certainly been observed among the witnesses interviewed but the extent to which



low ability has been seen to equate with violent behaviour has been difficult to assess. Before looking at the evidence on this given by the teachers of Meadowland School a historical perspective is offered concerning violence in the research district.

It is interesting to note that the sector of the City (particularly the district of New Lodge) which the Meadowland Estate outlies has over the generations gained something of a reputation for violence and Mr X, Head of Blair Primary School, made mention of this during an interview on 6 October, 1975. (Mr X had formerly been Head of Queensgate Junior School in New Lodge.)<sup>102</sup>

Compared with Meadowland, the Queensgate intake would seem to have very much more satisfactory home backgrounds: the family unit is strong in the essentially working class catchment area of Queensgate (which incidentally abuts on to that of Meadowland along the Salem Road). The nature of New Lodge may have been changing over the years and Mr X spoke of how in pre-war years it was not an area respectable folk would walk in after dark: it may then have been attractive to tourists, as it still is, but the police then knew it as a district prone to violence and robbery. Mr X said that this was the part of town which contained servicemen and their families at that time when the City was an important garrison town and he felt that the pre-war serviceman led a very much rougher existence than his far less numerous post-war counterparts.

During an interview on 28 January, 1976, Miss S declared that it was the general lack of ability to communicate among the people of the Meadowland Estate which was a direct cause of the many conflict situations that arose. Differences - frustration - blows: this was a common sequence amongst the adults, and the children acted likewise. Feuds frequently occurred in the neighbourhood. She accepted that local people used extra-verbal symbols but she had little patience with the efficacy of restricted codes: people could either communicate in a civilised manner or they resorted to animal brawling.\*<sup>103</sup> It was after

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\* The strong imputation in Miss S's testimony is acknowledged but her words were consistently supported during her later testimonies: some other staff members talked in this vein during interviews.

a tape-recorded participant-observation period with Miss S's remedial class for first year pupils that the following note was written:-<sup>104</sup>

Martin, one of a family of twelve children, was non-committal as to whether he liked reading, writing or even playing but he gave me a knowing look when he was asked whether he liked fighting. (I learnt later that this quiet, withdrawn boy was quite violent outside the classroom.)

Also in this group was Joseph who had little to say about his home circumstances but possessed a particularly good knowledge of television's fantasy figures of a violent disposition. Recorded already in this chapter under 'insufficient sleep' has been mention of a boy in one of Miss S's older remedial groups: the boy from a large family who slept in a room with two brothers, aged twelve and fifteen. The relevant phrases were 'He can't stop leaving me alone' and 'They got rough sometimes...'.<sup>105</sup> Recorded earlier as well, under 'general sense of insecurity', from this participant-observation period are extracts concerning injuries and weapons.

Interviewer: Do people sometimes stab each other around here?

Boy: No. They play around with knives and cut their hands a bit.

Interviewer: What, the big boys? [Giggles]

Boy: I cut myself once with my little one...didn't hurt...  
I just went [grimace] ....

Interviewer: What, just to see what it was like?

Boy: Yeah, worth it! [Giggle]

The conversation got on to tent pegs and even big nails as potential weapons.<sup>106</sup>

Returning to the impressions of the interviewed teachers, Mrs H spoke of one of her pupils called Bob:<sup>107</sup>

...he's quite keen to please, a bit under-handed...but I think that's a trait in a lot of the children round here. A lot of them have to be at home because if they're caught doing anything they're half-murdered sometimes.

This idea was developed by Mr H, following on from his words quoted above under 'sense of insecurity' and beginning 'It's very much like being a tight-rope in a way. They can burst into tears at any moment.'

The dialogue later went as follows:-<sup>108</sup>

Mr H: I think perhaps that the idea of having something explained to them about their behaviour is better understood, [this related to children from better homes] lots of these kids are so used to being told what to do without being given an explanation... "Don't do that" is what they're used to, without being given a reason.

Interviewer: This came out last session with Mrs H. She said they're used to being thumped and chased and screamed at and I think she said this made them a bit devious....

Mr H: ...we find that they can't get on with each other for very long: they can't work in groups.

Interviewer: Is that so?....

Mr H: Well, somebody bumps into someone, instead of waiting for the apology they say "You do that again and I'll beat your head in" - always. Very few kids - you know - and a lot of the girls are like this as well, they'd rather scream round first and then....There have been a couple of times when I've got two people together to find out what's actually happened but you never....

[The changing of a cassette caused the rest of this conversation to be missed.]

Reverting to violence among the adults of the Meadowland Estate,

Mrs J said during the interview of 21 May, 1976:-<sup>109</sup>

Out of 36 there are four that I know of whose father or the man that is living in the house is in prison, either for bashing up the next door neighbour or non-payment of...or, sort of telling fibs about the drawing of money, you know.

And, later in the same interview:-<sup>110</sup>

I think these children need to be talked to. They need to be listened to. They are not used to conversation at the table and still after a year...trying to sort them out. They are very often cuffed, you know what I mean.

Then back again to the adults of the neighbourhood:-<sup>111</sup>

Interviewer: But from what you and others have been saying, even the nuclear family isn't very strong anyway...the whole thing often breaks down because of...shifting around?

Mrs J: Yes, for instance I came along Raven Avenue - I don't know who lives at number 83 - I was a bit late the other morning, later than usual, and I had to stop because you are very aware of children as you're driving up there and there was a chap about our age bashing a woman about thirty - and this was at ten to nine - he was bashing her and laying in and I thought now what shall I do. Well what can you do? What should I do? I mean I drove on: but he was laying in to her and she was screaming....

Interviewer: Was anyone else around?

Mrs J: Nobody, they had all disappeared - just getting on. There was a big van outside...there's a lot here of all sorts....

Already included from among Mrs J's evidence, when 'insufficient sleep' was being considered, are her words:-<sup>112</sup>

Interviewer: Do they get enough sleep?....

Mrs J: No, definitely not - of the right quality of sleep because some of them have dreadful rows in the house...it's very disturbing going to bed, they might get a good thump to go to bed with and perhaps a good thump to get up with....

Later in the interview Mrs J was comparing her more able pupils in Hertfordshire with her Meadowland children.<sup>113</sup>

Interviewer: Are there kids that work and you still find are a nuisance?

Mrs J: No, because I think after all these years that it is with intelligence - you get very bright boys who are very naughty boys.

Interviewer: Yes, because they're bored.

Mrs J: Quite, but that doesn't happen here.... No, not at all. It's very often the boys are naughty, it's the same pattern, they go to bed too late, the home life, just the usuals, sort of mediocre, they get thumped at home so the only language they know is a thump at school and I don't like physical contact. It's not fair and this is not what I'm here for.

Mrs Q was less keen to talk about violence in the neighbourhood.<sup>114</sup>

Interviewer: Have you come across much violence...with adults - do they thump each other, or do the kids get very violent?

Mrs Q: Well I've got one...[hesitation]...Well, I haven't noticed though I think other teachers have noticed it. There are several well-known local men who have violent temperaments: there was one in a shop the other day...and cursing...next door to being a murderer.

Interviewer: You mean he lived next door to a murderer?

Mrs O: No, he is virtually a murderer himself...or they all say he was...he's an awful chappie...he blinded somebody and so on. I don't know whether it was true...but he is certainly disliked in the neighbourhood.

Later she mentioned a close link between language inadequacy and violent behaviour.<sup>115</sup>

I've got a boy in my class...comes from a very culturally deprived language background and he resorts really to thumping people because he cannot make himself understood to other people.

Inconsistency of parental control was seen by Mrs T as a possible reason for children's poor behaviour.<sup>116</sup>

...because mother has not been consistent. She might whack him in the end but he has disobeyed about six times before they get to that stage and it leads him to believe that, you know, it's worth trying it on.

She believed that such erratic parental control was more likely to produce spitefully violent children than consistently firm discipline, with or without smacks. It was with this last example in mind that Mrs T looked more closely at possible reasons for a mother carrying out her child-rearing duties unsatisfactorily - again, adult violence was included:-<sup>117</sup>

I think, providing the mother has emotional stability, you see that's the important thing; if she's frustrated either through the lack of money or because the husband's drinking it or knocking her about, or she's pregnant every year, then it affects her emotions which in turn she takes out in some way on the children.

At a later interview Mrs O also pondered the effect of treatment at home upon school behaviour.<sup>118</sup>

Some with poor backgrounds are loud and others are more withdrawn, it just depends.... They do have behaviour problems, they are difficult some of them.... It depends really on what goes on at home...: some of the children perhaps that are hit a lot at home are very subdued at school or it might have the reverse effect and make them loud....

As at an earlier interview, Mrs Q was encouraged, without much success, to talk about violence and aggression in the neighbourhood: only in the occasional remark did she in fact do this. When telling of a petition sent to a local paper asking for separate play space for younger children the following was said:-<sup>119</sup>

...because the older ones were using their play space down there in an aggressive way...the younger ones did not want to go in it.

A bald question was then put to her.<sup>120</sup>

Interviewer: Is there much quarrelling in this district (a) amongst adults and (b) among the children?

Mrs Q: Ah, yes, the whole time [laughing]... It's a constant battle against children who are having petty arguments in the classroom. They're for ever finding something.

Interviewer: This is right across the board, is it?

Mrs Q: Yes, they all get involved.

Interviewer: But do the adults quarrel a lot, do you think?

Mrs Q: Well from the number of divorces and separations and, er, reconciliations that you hear about, yes, the whole time...within the family, and with neighbours and so on. There was a quarrel about the fete, I think... That was a slightly more sensible kind of thing... People organising the fete. It's solved, but it happened.

This account of the quarrel over the school fete organised by parents showed it to be a surprisingly middle-class affair for an area seen as deprived by so many witnesses: it did not relate in any way as to the scene of irrational and often squalid violence so often painted by the adults interviewed.\*

Aspects of the interviewing at the 'Battered Wives' Refuge have already been reported but it would seem that some of the points noted

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\* It is appreciated that the distribution of alleged violence on the Meadowland Estate is unclear; yet most subjects clearly thought violence to be fairly general and quarrelling to be the norm.

after this investigation will help give perspective to the above evidence concerning violence.<sup>121</sup>

Stories of violence within families were particularly horrific when heard in a reasonably calm interview situation yet such scenarios had often built up gradually with the actors contributing through the interaction process and becoming thoroughly familiar with the way in which a certain gesture or word elicited a particular response. Love and hate can manifest themselves in a short space of time in some household situations and it is so hard to define "normal" although we are all inclined to judge what is good and what is bad behaviour for both husband and wife, regardless of the variety of cultural settings existing within a neighbourhood today, let alone the psychological state of the partners concerned. "Are the children being harmed, or at risk?" is a very reasonable question we often fall back on when such rationalisation is offered in the course of a discussion on family violence. The person who points out how incredibly resilient children can be is not well received when the debate reaches the "what about the children?" point, yet no matter how kindly-intentioned folk are in placing so much consideration upon the children of consistently warring couples there seems little doubt that sympathy for such children often ebbs away and labels are firmly applied once they have betrayed by speech or action that they are indeed the offspring of the warring Smiths, or Joneses, or Browns. Children can show themselves to be very staunch to the most "unsatisfactory" parents. I feel quite confident that all the children who were at school when I visited The Refuge would not have given 100 per cent support to their mothers' initiative in moving away from home. This was not a question I could bluntly ask of the women but their conversation indicated that the children would readily go home, given the chance - perhaps there was a hankering after home, and even Dad.

To sum up, the children of battered wives are seen as deprived by many adults, including teachers, but although sympathy may abound in the initial stages of becoming acquainted it is not usually long before they have been labelled as "odd" or at least "different" from normal children by those very same adults. Perhaps parents need, above all, to present a very "normal" front to the world if their children are not going to be given a "deprived" tag at school and in other group situations?

#### Anti-social behaviour and low moral standards

A good deal of the evidence collected could belong under this heading and it is necessary to remember once again that it is the subjects' own conceptions of deprivation that are being examined and that it is intended to avoid preconceptions about the term 'deprivation'. It

would seem probable that unsatisfactory social and moral standards are highly visible to 'well-brought-up' teachers and others responsible for the education and well-being of the children of the Meadowland Estate.

In the next group, A.IV, evidence concerning family life and domestic organisation will be examined and no doubt some satisfactory aspects will come to light. Here, although notice will be taken of moral standards seen to obtain in the neighbourhood, evidence of the outward signs of upbringing brought into the school by children seen as deprived will have close attention.

There can be no doubt about the low moral standards seen to exist in the homes of these children. In the first interview at Meadowland School the Acting Head, Mr Ho, cited the numbers of fathers in prison and the 'loose sexual life' in many of his pupils' homes.<sup>122</sup> His deputy, Miss S, spoke of 'transient companions', the lack of a 'regular dad' and the 'amorous liaisons' which were a continuing feature of the neighbourhood.<sup>123</sup> There were many examples from witnesses to illustrate these comments but perhaps Mr H's statement concerning one of his third year juniors was the most dramatic illustration of Mr Ho's first point.<sup>124</sup>

Dad's just been nabbed; he's been caught four times and stolen £3000 this time, found to be in possession of a sawn-off shot gun...and he has been inside before; I think he'll be away for a while again and at the moment the kids are being taken off by foster people, to give Mum a break.

Seeking opinion on the extent of criticism about the reportedly loose marital and extra-marital arrangements the following was recorded during an interview with Mrs H.<sup>125</sup>

Mrs H: Well it's quite an open thing around here you know, that you have two dads or two mums, or....

Interviewer: ...I've come across it all the time but there is no sort of heavy moral criticism, is there?... Have you come across any?



Mrs E: Well, I did. It was rather funny with one child: she came and said to me "We're moving" and I said "Oh, what a shame" and "Why are you moving?" and the answer came out really pat, "Well, Daddy's knocking around with another woman up the road. You can't hold your head up when you go out because all the neighbours know about it you see?" I thought that well that's an adult speaking and it's something she has picked up.... But as a rule you don't hear much criticism in that sort of way from the children. They just seem to accept it as a natural thing....

Mrs J emphasised how immoral the parents of her children tended to be<sup>126</sup> and she gave examples in each of the three interviews with her, for example on 21 May 76,<sup>127</sup> 'I think this is the third chap she's had, she's got living with her now'. Perhaps rather a different emphasis was mixed in with the disgust for home reading habits expressed in the third interview<sup>128</sup> (her surprise at the incidence of illiteracy among parents of her pupils is recorded later).

Mrs J: They might have a few newspapers, the sort with nude ladies in them. If ever I ask for newspapers to cover the tables...the selection! I have never in a year had a full-sized paper. You know what I mean?

Interviewer: Yes, indeed I do.

Mrs J: So this all reflects what is going on in the home....

It was later in the same interview that the following statement, quoted in full when 'violence' was being considered, was made:-<sup>129</sup>

Mrs J: There's no loyalty with one another, they'll blame each other in the classroom, they blame each other and fib to you...you never know when the children are telling the truth.

In an interview with Mrs Q earlier in the year the following dialogue took place:-<sup>130</sup>

Interviewer: Are they easily shocked? Have you ever seen any of them shocked by anything you have done or said?

Mrs Q: No, not really...they're very broad-minded. We have our first sex education programmes this week.... It's the first time the first years have done it but they glibly accepted it, they weren't shocked or anything....

Interviewer: It's probably a good time to start it....

Mrs Q: Yes, they took it very naively and quite pleasantly really.

Interviewer: This was on the television, was it?

Mrs Q: Yes.

Interviewer: There wouldn't be any objection here would there? Nobody has taken an interest in it?

Mrs Q: Oh yes. Three of my parents came to watch with their children.

Interviewer: You told them it was going to happen?

Mrs Q: Yes, and nobody objected and said 'my child can't go'.

Interviewer: Of course, they could withdraw children if they wanted to.

Mrs Q: Yes.... And one parent kept their child at home to watch it with him...because she wanted to explain it to him properly and felt that he might feel inhibited if he had to sit with others in school.

Interviewer: This sounds a very caring sort of parent.

Mrs Q: Two parents: too possessive...that's one of the two "better" parents...although she isn't better because she's possessive.

At an interview later on Mrs T saw the father as a crucial influence.<sup>131</sup>

The following passage is included in a longer quotation in Chapter 3 but it is offered again here to highlight Mrs T's strong moral point.

...if you can get a child to respect and look up to his father, if the father plays his role in the making of the moral standards they are much less likely to go astray. Mother is the provider of comfort, mother is the provider of food, clothes - you know, the instant comforts from mother: the long-standing things, I think, come from father.

[This firm conviction of Mrs T stemmed from her findings as a teacher of young men in prison.]

A number of witnesses have intimated that many of the parents of children seen as deprived draw social security benefits dishonestly. Mr T, Deputy Manager of the City D.H.S.S. Office, was anxious that rogues on the make from D.H.S.S. benefits - he did not think their numbers were large - should not be mixed in with those who leaned heavily upon the benefit

system for survival.<sup>132</sup> On the other hand Mr Bb, the Housing Manager, was convinced that there were many families in an estate such as Meadowland prepared to take advantage of any chance to cheat the system (he spoke at length about rent arrears in this connection) and misuse property. A note made after this interview reads:-<sup>133</sup>

what was needed was sufficient staff to keep a close watch on the way in which tenants used Council property and for there to be plenty of penalties of a financial nature whenever misuse was detected.

As mentioned in Chapter 3 and earlier in this chapter, Mr Bb and his Lettings Officer spoke about moral standards among council house tenants and found them to be sadly wanting.

Claiming free school meals when not entitled came up a number of times when dishonesty was being discussed. An example would be as follows:-<sup>134</sup>

Mrs J: A lot of them have no right to be on free dinners. I had my eyes opened once again: we had an Open Evening last Thursday and I met the dads, you know, and they only looked like boys and so on, but they are real dodgers, they really are - most of them. We're bringing up a generation of dodgers, aren't we?

Mr S, the Senior Education Welfare Officer, supported this theme and expanded upon the ease with which the unemployed were able to lay their hands upon cash, to the extent that they tended to lose the habit of work and become unemployable.<sup>135</sup> Mr T of the D.H.S.S., however, insisted that the Department was concerned with making cash payments to those qualified to receive them and a main responsibility of his officials was to see that correct statutory payments were being made.<sup>136</sup> It is interesting to ponder the way in which witnesses confuse what they consider to be over-generous entitlements with anti-social fiddling and immorality.

Mrs Q contributed as follows:-

Mrs Q: I think they live for themselves.... I don't think you should entirely live for the children, but....

Interviewer: What has been coming through very strongly is this "misapplication" of money....

Mrs Q: Yes, well the mothers go to bingo...it's just mishandled; spent on drink, on cigarettes and bingo and the wrong things....

The children were generally seen as having poor standards of behaviour but witnesses occasionally praised their suppression of outside standards within school. For example, the following dialogue occurred with Mrs Q:-<sup>137</sup>

Mrs Q: And the children are jolly good about swearing because they don't - they go home and...everybody swears black and blue, you know because of the language the children use.

Interviewer: So they are really bi-lingual in that sense?

Mrs Q: Yes, occasionally it comes out if they get a temper or something like that, but really we've heard very little swearing...and you hear them swearing when they're talking to each other but when they start talking to you they don't swear.

Already stealing had been mentioned during this interview, in connection with children being 'nicked for stealing from the rubbish dump', and the dialogue continued as follows:-

Interviewer: Is there much stealing...in the school do you think?

Mrs Q: It is difficult...I suppose it is stealing, yes...petty...taking pencils and crayons and so on.

Interviewer: But you would expect that wouldn't you?

Mrs Q: But if I left my purse lying around they wouldn't take that.

Interviewer: But that was yours and they'd respect you....

Mrs Q: I don't think they would take my things. There is one girl in my class who steals to annoy the other children.

Interviewer: But she's known about and does she admit it?

Mrs Q: No. It is a cry for help but I can't think what she wants helping with.... I spoke to her parents and they seemed to know what she was like and so on...they didn't know she took things at all...she seemed to have her fair share of potential at home. She had less reason for stealing than other children.

Already mentioned from records of an interview with Mrs H is the lad in her class who is:-<sup>138</sup>

...quite keen to please, a bit under-handed...but I think that's a trait in a lot of the children round here. A lot of them have to [when] at home because if they're caught doing anything they're half-murdered sometimes.

The interview continued:-

Interviewer: That's an interesting one, isn't it?

Mrs H: Yes, but I think this is why they do it a lot; and it's very catching, if you get a few in the class that are a bit under-handed they soon pass it on to the ones that aren't normally....

An interesting ethical point arose during a participant-observation period when a child was telling the researcher about a theft in the story she had been reading. She was asked if it was all right to steal and the reply was a thoughtful 'Yes, if he really wanted it badly'.<sup>139</sup>

What has been variously described as naughtiness, rudeness and cheekiness has featured from time to time in the evidence offered about children seen as deprived. Mrs H mentioned the case of eight-year-old Andrew who had all manner of home problems but whose extreme naughtiness in school had followed something of a pattern.<sup>140</sup>

I think it was a complete half-term without being away and then the trouble started with dinner money and he's away when his mother's out of credit on his dinner money... which is a shame because while we were having him here every day the problems of behaviour were getting loss. Behaviour problems were always worse on a Monday morning, well, all day Monday; and Tuesday wouldn't be too bad... but then if he had a week off you see you've not just got the week-end to contend with, he's had nine days not conforming.

Earlier in this same interview Mrs H had mentioned one of her boys who attended a remedial reading group with Miss S because he was 'a bit of a social problem'. The following dialogue took place:-<sup>141</sup>

Interviewer: Are they seriously under par? It is reading age you choose them on?

Mrs H: Mostly on reading age, yes. One of them who goes down there, his reading isn't too bad at all but he is the sort of child that does take up a lot of your time and doesn't fit in very well...er, so well with the class, and so Miss S has him down there really for...in some ways to give me a break.

On another occasion Mrs T, the remedial infant teacher, helped continue this theme.<sup>142</sup>

Interviewer: It has been suggested...in the junior school there is a bit of a tendency, although reading scores are there, for kids to come that are a bit of a nuisance, shall we say....

Mrs T: That's right.

Interviewer: But this wouldn't be true in the infant school perhaps, would it? Or do you think it would?

Mrs T: Well, I would never take a child just because he was a pest, to get him out of the teacher's hair.

Interviewer: No, not just because, but, er....

Mrs T: But those sort of children sometimes need more concentration, you see don't they? You know, they've got butterfly minds; they might be quite bright in many ways. They might be brighter than the rest of the group but they don't apply themselves.

It needs to be recorded that any off-loading of 'naughty' junior children into Miss S's remedial groups is occasionally offset in a small way by the presence of children who are no longer in need of remedial teaching. Two charming ten-year-old girls of this category sat in Miss S's remedial group for third and fourth year pupils during a participant-observation period.<sup>143</sup> They were there to keep a single remedial girl company in a group which was otherwise composed of boys. They were very conscious of their comparatively superior reading ability and one informed me that she wanted to go to the Frederick Blenheim (selective secondary) School. She wanted to be a typist when she grew up 'cos if you're a typist you get a lot of money my Mum says'.

The Head of the Infants' Section, Mrs J., contributed fully to the material made available about unsatisfactory behaviour of children seen as deprived and this is instanced by the following extract from a recorded interview (part of which has already been quoted under 'insufficient sleep' and 'violence').<sup>144</sup>

Interviewer: Now, behaviour we've talked about quite a lot. Would you say of the kids that are a nuisance, and there clearly are some, are these mainly the ones you would think of as deprived?

Mrs J: You get your odd one on a set course, but it is closely allied, one thing is allied to the other. I can think of odd examples where they aren't. Then you get to know their parents and you chat to them. I can always understand, you know, I can see why so-and-so is like he is... Yes, I think these things are closely allied.

Interviewer: ...are there kids that work and you still find are a nuisance?

Mrs J: No, because I think after all these years, that is with intelligence, you get very bright boys who are very naughty boys.

Interviewer: Yes, because they are bored?

Mrs J: Quite, but that doesn't happen here...No, not at all. It's very often the boys are naughty; it's the same pattern, they go to bed too late, the home life - just the usuals, sort of mediocre - they get thumped at home so the only language they know is a thump at school and I don't like physical contact. It's not fair and this is not what I'm here for.

Mrs Q helped further develop the topic:-<sup>145</sup>

Interviewer: ...There is a danger, I suppose, throughout the country, that a kiddie who is suffering all sorts of deprivation can be quiet and withdrawn and not be noticed...which I'm sure used to happen more than it does today, I mean when people weren't so fussed about these things. I've often ...?...about this because teachers feel quite strongly about the behaviour of kids, quite obviously....

Mrs Q: Well, their behaviour in that they are rude and so on obviously is something which comes from the home because they aren't taught politeness and that sort of thing... They aren't polite quite often: I mean there are very few 'thank yous' and 'pleases' and all this sort of thing.

Interviewer: Yes, behaviour is a term...which covers so many things.

Mrs Q: And their cheekiness and so on. You could imagine them having a similar conversation with a cocky sort of attitude with their parents which might be all right at home and might be a laugh at home but at school, you know, it's not wanted.... It's just a case of what is accepted within the circumstances, isn't it, what is acceptable at home and what is acceptable at school and the mass of the children, I suppose, manage to adjust quite well. I mean they don't swear in school...but you know jolly well that once they get home...they're going to swear away. And when you're not listening they'll swear.

At the end of this interview Mrs Q talked about parental influence and behaviour. <sup>146</sup>

Interviewer: Would they blame the school, do you think, for bad behaviour in the home? Do they come up and say... 'be more firm with him because he's a damned nuisance at home'?....

Mrs Q: No.

(And, also mentioned in Chapter 3)

Interviewer: I think the West Indian parents are very good at that in London, aren't they?

Mrs Q: Yes. They'll say 'you can always hit my child...if he's badly behaved' and so on; they'll give you the right to do that. I think they know what their children are really like, whether they're naughty or not.

The County Council social worker, Mr Ta, proposed some convincing reasons (examples have already been given under 'vandalism') for the poor behaviour often observed among children seen as deprived but he was clear in his mind as to what was needed when misbehaviour assumed delinquent proportions as the children grew older. There was little provision in this area for any kind of intermediate treatment and he felt attendance centres at schools over week-ends would go a long way towards checking patterns of poor behaviour among teenagers and they could have some influence upon attitudes to be found in primary schools serving estates such as Meadowland. <sup>147</sup>

As well as poor, dishonest and sometimes violent behaviour, the evidence introduced in this section has revealed a generally low standard



of social behaviour. Witnesses have indicated that the minimum standards they expect for a satisfactory social life are frequently not attained. Predictably there have been many criticisms concerning eating habits and manners. In a discussion with Mr Mo, the Acting Head of Meadowland School, and his deputy, Miss S, it was disclosed how frequently local houses did not possess a dining table and how, outside school, many children seldom sat down properly to a meal in the company of others. Mrs J developed the theme during an interview as follows:-<sup>148</sup>

Interviewer: What about eating habits? They're good school dinners they have here, aren't they, and they're quite well supervised....

Mrs J: I don't know, I wouldn't have those standards in my own home. But I try to say "use your knife and fork properly" and "sit up" and "do it properly" but I'm not too strict because I do infant and junior....

Interviewer: Every day?

Mrs J: Yes. I'm not too strict....

Interviewer: Are they separate from the main part where the juniors eat?

Mrs J: Well, they're later. I have about 86 infants in the hall: you know, food on the floor and they knock the drinks of water and all this. You see I was so shocked at first then you accept it. I try not to be too hard on them... and I don't ask for silence, I keep saying "a little quieter" because I think perhaps it's a social time and they benefit from this. But their eating habits, they're ooh...you know, they're of a very low standard, really. Well I think.

At another interview Mrs O spoke of a boy who did come from what most teachers would term a 'better' home background.<sup>149</sup>

Mrs O: ...You wouldn't say he's as deprived as a lot of children and yet his deprivation is that he can't communicate particularly well with the other children who are of a different standard and a different class to him.

Interviewer: You might say he is culturally deprived the wrong way on almost?

Mrs Q: Yes, he is. If you are middle class...and you send your children to this school it is completely wrong for those children, they can't cope with it. And you're doing your child no good if you send it here if you're a "better" person - oh, I can't really say "better person" [chuckle] - if your social....

Interviewer: Social difference is the problem, I suppose.

Mrs Q: Yes, they're not accepted by the other children. They are different, I mean they know more, they've got more general knowledge.\*

After talking about the low social standards existing among the children of Meadowland School, Mrs J spoke as follows:-<sup>150</sup>

Mrs J: I think that's why you can stay too long in a school like this. After a year I appreciate that there are people here that have been here too long because they accept... lower standards. Lower standards of teaching because the children aren't capable of too much. I think it also creeps into your own social into your own personal life.

Interviewer: Yes, it can take on you and change you.

Mrs J: Oh, yes, and you don't realise it is happening.

Evidence relating to this group of propositions has been plentiful but it is clear that some witnesses have seen these particular manifestations of deprivation as of greater importance than have others: notably Mr H and Mrs Q have contributed little to this section, although neither teacher would wish to deny the existence of a number of children whom they saw as deprived in their classes.

A. IV Children seen having low aspirations, being inept, poorly organised and lacking in social skills

Again it is necessary to report impressions of the children and the adults with whom they live. At first examination this section is reminiscent of the educability studies of the 1950s and 1960s and one

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\* The recorded presence of middle class families in the Census Enumeration Districts of the Meadowland School's catchment area caused a reader of this thesis to wonder if this pupil was in fact as isolated as Mrs Q suggests.

could quite easily become engaged in an attempt to make the material collected fit the class-culture paradigm.<sup>151</sup> However, social class per se has not been in general use as a unit of classification in this research project and so, although witnesses will undoubtedly have had certain preconceptions as they have made their statements, it is hoped that what they say relates directly to the people they have in mind and not to stereotypes which may linger, for example, from past acquaintance with the class-culture paradigm in sociology of education text-books.

Of the statements so far considered the evidence collected under this heading would seem to be of the greatest significance in terms of the awarding of the label 'deprived child'. Apart from where reading ages and other test results have been used it has been difficult for witnesses to be at all objective in their statements: even so, their impressions are presented with conviction.

The aspirations of children seen as deprived, as those of their parents, are shown by witnesses to be low; they are not seen as having the kind of ability likely to help their school performance\* in any way, there is seldom much about their lives that is clearly organised and, as has been suggested in other sections, they are seen to have had little opportunity to develop useful social skills.

#### Low aspirations

After the general alert given by Mr Q, the City's educational psychologist, concerning what might be expected of the children of Meadowland School - he said that they had a poor attitude to school, as revealed by the Bristol Social Adjustment Guide,<sup>152</sup> and it was at

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\* As indicated in the footnote on the contents page for this chapter, educational ability/attainment has had to be allowed a place in this section in order that the evidence offered should be properly considered.

an interview with Mr X, Head of Blair Primary School, that the first intimation of the low aspirations of Meadowland parents for their children came to light. He was discussing eleven plus selection at Blair Primary School, which has continued to enjoy considerable success for its pupils in terms of secondary selection (he had sent on thirty children to selective education that autumn and others had taken up places in two famous public schools in the district; very few had gone to the secondary modern school) when he made comparison with his former school, Queensgate Primary in New Lodge.<sup>153</sup>

...Queensgate had never shown such pretensions, even in the high days of eleven-plus selection: in fact it would have been quite unrealistic to point Queensgate in this direction (even if the Head and staff had thought it a desirable thing) for the parents generally did not have such aspirations for their children.

Even so, as mentioned above under 'Violence', the Queensgate intake would seem to have very much more satisfactory home backgrounds than that of Meadowland School.\*

When Miss S was first interviewed the generally low aspirations of the local people were discussed.<sup>154</sup>

She confirmed that manual working class families were most numerous but then said how difficult it was for her when a parent came along showing 'unreal' aspirations\*\* for his or her offspring at the school. She gave an example of how a father had recently been regarding his son. He wanted the boy to have a technical education but Miss S felt she had to discourage the man from pushing his application to Frederick Blenheim School because she knew the boy would be unhappy there. "How could he do his homework in such a home?" she said.

[\*\* 'unreal' for Miss S, that is]

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\* The intention here has been to show evidence of primary school children from (a) highly supportive home backgrounds (Blair School), (b) satisfactory but low-aspiring home backgrounds (Queensgate School), and (c) less-satisfactory and low-aspiring home backgrounds (Meadowland School).

Of the children aged eleven and destined for secondary school the following September in Miss S's top remedial group during a participant-observation period<sup>155</sup> few had given much thought to their secondary school destination yet awhile. Already mentioned in the last section is the girl in this group who wanted to become a typist and her motive will be remembered: "'Cos if you're a typist you get a lot of money my Mum says'.<sup>156</sup>

Discussing an eight-year-old boy with Mrs H the following dialogue was recorded:-<sup>157</sup>

Interviewer: Interesting to try and project ahead, isn't it, with a lad like Paul. What's going to happen to him? He'll probably go to Edward Gorton Secondary Modern School... He might pick up at some stage, I suppose.

Mrs H: I doubt it; I think he'll be a general dogsbody all his life really.

Interviewer: I wonder what sort of job he will do? There is no way of knowing, is there?

Mrs H: Well, if he does anything, I think it will be something like roadsweeping or something like that...that doesn't take too much energy and you can go on at your own pace without someone telling you what to do, or else he will just be on the dole all the time...I can't see him making much. He really is deprived that child.

During an interview with Mrs Q the following dialogue occurred:-<sup>158</sup>

Interviewer: These kids, have they much in the way of ambition? Have you come across any who want to do perhaps unusual jobs?

Mrs Q: ...Bill...wants to be a detective, but apart from that, not really.

Interviewer: And we can presume that they will go to sort of humdrum jobs. Of course, the first year juniors aren't likely [to have job ambitions]...are they? Perhaps when they get older....

Mrs Q: I don't think they have any imagination to think of what they are going to do.

Interviewer: They shrug their shoulders about which school they are going to afterwards, they don't worry about that too much do they?

Mrs Q: No, they don't.

At a later interview this conversation took place.<sup>159</sup>

Interviewer: And that leads on to thoughts about social and occupational skills....

Mrs Q: Well, I can't imagine anybody...well, two boys in my class have got semi-professional parents...post office workers... and, so I don't think I see much future for the others in any direction, apart from being manual workers.

Interviewer: If they want to be mobile...I suppose they might do this by joining the armed forces.

Mrs Q: Yes, we've got the Army section and some of them might see that as being their future.

Interviewer: They don't...go away and dig holes in the ground or work on oil rigs or anything?

Mrs Q: Not really, one or two have done I believe but not that sort of thing...they've got jobs away but....

Interviewer: It's not the cultural thing is it in the area?

Mrs Q: No.

Interviewer: Do any get to the mines?

Mrs Q: We've got one mine worker that I know of, but they've moved into the area.

Interviewer: They don't seem to know how to get out...perhaps they don't want to get out and I think Mrs J was saying that they want to come back anyway....

Mrs Q: They do, they like their friends being round here....

This theme was touched upon during an interview with Mrs J.<sup>160</sup>

Interviewer: But as they get older I suppose older brothers and sisters operate on them and suppress any spark that's there perhaps?  
[Perhaps not a very charitable intrusion but it was a follow-up from an earlier discussion.]

Mrs J: And there's so many kinds in the families....

Interviewer: Do the older brothers and sisters stay in the neighbourhood?

Mrs J: They seem to, don't they? They move away but they come back.

Interviewer: So in spite of all this there is a basic loyalty to the area?

Mrs J: There must be something.... It's pretty grim, that's how I see it.

Interviewer: The very young ones obviously do not have the faintest idea of what they want to do when they go to work but their brothers and sisters, do you find they go shooting off and doing something you wouldn't expect? The young ones don't come and tell you?

Mrs J: Oh, goodness gracious no. I've got one child whose brother's in the Army and another one's brother is waiting to go in the Army.

Interviewer: Well that's a nice escape in a sense, I suppose? If they pick up a skill.

Mrs J: Yes, well one works in Halfords, one older brother, well he did but I think he's got the sack, you know I don't know what he's doing now. Oh no, you never get any educational surprises. Not since I came anyway.

### Ability

Again it was the initial interview with Mr O, the City's educational psychologist, which alerted the researcher to the idea that, as far as ability was concerned, the children at Meadowland School were 'at the bottom of the league',<sup>161</sup> and in the first interview with Mr Mo, acting Head of Meadowland School, this impression was confirmed.<sup>162</sup> He acknowledged that socially and academically the school left a great deal to be desired. School attainment was generally low and that summer only one child moved on to a selective secondary school. The school had provided a good proportion of the intake for the City's new E.S.N. school. At a later interview Mr Mo said that it had not been possible to recommend any of his top juniors for selective schools in the current year.<sup>163</sup>

Mrs J wanted to compare the performance at school of the children she had taught in Hertfordshire.<sup>164</sup> It was to be expected that children with such advantageous home backgrounds would do better and some 70 per cent of the top year in her previous school had transferred to selective secondary schools: the remainder had gone to the highly satisfactory comprehensive school nearby. She confessed that there had been a few backward children in that part of Hertfordshire but it did not seem to

matter so much when they came from 'civilised homes'.<sup>165</sup>

An indication of the difference in conceptions of general ability was given when the following statement by Mr X, Head of the academically successful Blair Primary School:-<sup>166</sup>

The conscientious teacher can and must do all the remedial teaching that is necessary within his or her own class unit

came to be compared with this dialogue recorded in an interview with

Mrs H: what is said typifies reading requirements in Meadowland School.

She said that eleven of her class of over thirty were withdrawn for work in one of Miss S's remedial groups.<sup>167</sup>

Interviewer: I met all sorts there but what got me in Miss S's group was the tremendous keenness they seemed to have....

Mrs H: We found this last year, because I'm keen on reading and she's keen on them reading and last year...she commented on...the enthusiasm of all of them...there wasn't anybody who was loth to read.

Interviewer: ...they come back into your class, don't they? They go and do a term or sometimes more than a term....

Mrs H: Oh no, they just go for an hour each day...They go for the whole year.

Interviewer: Some of these children seem to go back to their classes eventually, but this is not very usual?

Mrs H: Yes. Well last year with the class I had...she started off by having two groups out: one group she had every day, they were the children whose reading ages were two or two and a half years behind their actual age, and then another group she had twice a week - they were children who were about eighteen months behind their actual age. And then about halfway through the second term we reassessed them and most of the second group she sent back, they didn't go to her any more, and the ones that hadn't made a terrific amount of progress then they joined the poorer group who were by that time coming up to their level. Then she had just the one group, a larger group of about fifteen children, every day...and she still sees some of them now they are in third year.

Mrs H went on to elaborate how second year juniors seen as deprived seemed to slip behind the others with their reading progress more



noticeably than in the first year.\* On the whole it was the girls who seemed to pick up on their reading and not the boys at this stage.

To illustrate the Meadowland pupils' lack of school ability even more sharply the following extract from an interview with Mr H is offered:-<sup>168</sup>

Interviewer: And you pull out a number of children for Miss S's group, quite a lot. Mainly boys, are they?

Mr H: Yes, they're mainly boys.

Interviewer: Well I've seen...your pupils, haven't I?.... Now they're there (i.e., in the remedial group) basically because of their reading age. They've had a test and their reading is well down? Is that really why they find themselves with Miss S?

Mr H: Well, basically it is because their all-round ability is down...reading, that's what they concentrate on.... There are two or three of them that have still got a reading age of six - 6.8, 6.9....

In fact the reading ages recorded for this group of ten and eleven-year-olds, discovered by Miss S using Burt's Rearranged Test, were 6.0, 5.11, 6.5, 6.4, 7.1, 7.3, 6.6, 6.4, 6.2, 6.8, 6.4, 7.2 and 7.3.

Mrs Q helped to fill out the picture at a later interview when the following was recorded:-<sup>169</sup>

Interviewer: ...Now reading, you've got a fair number in your class... thirty odd - but how many go to Miss S...?

Mrs Q: Twenty two, but the others are not particularly good. I've just done their reading ages and only one came up to what it should have been.

Interviewer: You do your own testing, do you?

Mrs Q: Just the Short Burt Test.

Interviewer: And Mr Q (educational psychologist) comes round and does the other tests: does he do this fairly regularly?

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\* There is a continuing question as to whether these children are seen as deprived because they do badly: could it be that the other proposed indicators are more readily perceived among under-performing pupils?

Mrs Q: Certain children are recommended to him as being exceptionally bad - you could recommend the whole lot I suppose....

Interviewer: But he generally comes to see individuals, does he; he doesn't test on a class basis?

Mrs Q: No. They did some tests at the beginning of the year - first year tests in reading; but I think they were thinking of setting up a reading scheme or a reading workshop and so on in the vicinity. They were testing to see what the requirements were.

Interviewer: Is there a reading centre in the City?

Mrs Q: They are just starting one.

It is interesting to note that a well-disguised form of streaming did exist within the Junior Section and no child was withdrawn at that time for remedial teaching from two of the classes. Mrs H gave the clue to this.<sup>170</sup>

Miss S does not have anyone from Class Three, it's the one class that's a really average class.\*

In the Infants' Section selection for remedial work was along rather different lines as Mrs T illustrated in the following recorded interview:-<sup>171</sup>

Interviewer: So there are four infant classes then?

Mrs T: There are four; yes, reception and three others.

Interviewer: Now how would they be selected to come to your class.... Have they done tests, or is it just...?

Mrs T: No, it's not done through testing, because we think they're a bit young for testing anyway, it's done through the teacher's own experience of a child. I go to the class teacher and say 'Who do you think your...you know, worst dozen or so...' and then, sometimes we change over, we find a boy who's not....

Interviewer: So the Educational Psychologist isn't interested until they get into the Junior School, is he?

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\* 'really average' appears to be used in the traditional and exact sense. The researcher was not able to learn much about this class of comparative 'stars' and it is wondered whether it contained the missing middle class children indicated in the Census returns.

Mrs T: Now his new idea is that the younger you select the child for extra reading the better. In other words, the earlier you tackle the problem the less likely it is that the problem will persist - which I think is true.

It was later in this interview that Mrs T made the statement which follows (already quoted in a previous section):-

I would never take a child just because he was a pest, to get him out of the teacher's hair.

If Mr X's Blair Primary School has its pupils achieving in a way that many teachers would see as normal - and Mrs J's former school in Hertfordshire must be considered as rather extraordinary with its 70 per cent of the top year going to selective secondary schools - then surely the academic ability of Meadowland children as revealed in the above testimonies must be assessed as very poor. And however much the perceptions of teachers and others may be questioned and cultural difference discussed in the next chapter the objective reporting of test results has to be accepted. Earlier critical reference to the Bristol Social Adjustment Guides it is felt was valid in the circumstances described but it is not proposed to question the efficacy of the reading tests used or their administration. Having written this note so confidently, however, one feels the need to look again at Postman's satirical article 'The politics of reading' and, remembering the modest progress made, consider his final paragraph.<sup>172</sup> Many of them are seen as deprived by their teachers and other responsible adults and one wonders just how far this seen deprivation can be compensated for: the worst attainers certainly seem to find a sense of security in Miss S's withdrawal groups and do make some progress but the record of the top year children shows that the remedial facilities available barely scratch the surface of the literacy problem which is real enough, using anybody's perception.

Under the heading of 'ability' can be grouped expressed thoughts about intelligence, speech and language use. Mrs H's words in an interview apply:-<sup>173</sup>

Marilyn has terrible speech problems.... There again I suppose they are a deprived family, partly because of the size of it...and partly because of the mentality. I don't think any of them are over bright.

Later in the same interview a more general point was made.

Now things like that they're deprived of...conversation, you can't hold conversations with these children. Simple words that they don't know...well, I told them a story a little while ago that had a twist at the end of it about snowdrops and at the end of it they just sat there looking at me completely blankly and I said "Well, did you understand the story?" Puzzled frowns appeared on several faces and I said "Well what's snowdrops?" and nobody knew what a snow-drop was...I had several suggestions as to what it was but nobody could actually tell me what a snowdrop was. And they can't use words, they just don't have the ability; they don't talk at home with their parents.\*

The most extreme case of lack of verbal ability on arrival at school was recounted by Miss S.<sup>174</sup> Jimmy came to Meadowland School at the age of five only able to say 'No' and make animal noises: now at seven he was one of the most interesting children to talk to. He was an only child and had a step-father who rather resented him. Jimmy's vocabulary had grown enormously; at first he just used to touch people, or hit or stroke them. It was noticeable how the other children tolerated him and Miss S said that it was largely the understanding children around him who had brought him out of his original near-animal state.

A number of indications of unexpected ability were given and an example follows from Mr H.<sup>175</sup> It concerns a problem boy, Norman, whose mother had left home some three years before.

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\* A reader of this thesis has protested that ignorance of snowdrops is best understood as ignorance of snowdrops, rather than an index of home background or language use. Even so, Mrs H used this experience to illustrate the lack of conversation skills which she was sure existed.

Mr H: And what it was that's a great shame about this, Miss S and I talk about it, is that he is probably one of the most interesting to talk to and he can retain information in his head but he just cannot put it down on paper.

Interviewer: I'm surprised about this because...in his reading he has tremendous confidence and he has a go but he does not work it out somehow; I wonder why it is, it may be a blockage in confidence, it's hard to say....

Mr H: I mean that is what it is like sometimes, there's a pile of information or a pile of ability in behind something....

And he then spoke of another boy, Matthew:-<sup>176</sup>

Mr H: You wouldn't think it but he shows quite a lot of common sense, you wouldn't think it from his general academic ability...you might expect him not to show so much common sense. But I always have high expectations....

Interviewer: Len Wood, what about him?

Mr H: Now he's another one who's sensible....

A number of times Mr H suggested that children seen as deprived were not achieving at anything like their true potential. Phrases such as the following were used:-<sup>177</sup>

'...there is no encouragement towards school at all...'

'...there is nothing geared towards school...'

'...there's a lot of them, lots of brothers...it's a big family...'

Mrs Q felt there was a lack of logical thought in the children she saw as deprived.<sup>178</sup>

Mrs Q: ...They can't construct the idea of asking questions; if you give them an answer and say "What question have I asked?" they can't work it backwards.

Interviewer: No....

Mrs Q: No. I've got one boy in my class particularly, James... blond haired boy...comes from a very culturally deprived language background and he resorts really to thumping people because he cannot make himself understood to other people.

Mrs J contributed concerning knowledge, reasoning and potential of children she saw as deprived.<sup>179</sup>

Interviewer: Summing up.... The kids are pretty ill-informed about the everyday facts of life, are they?

Mrs J: Yes, they're not talked to or taken or shown or helped. It's anything I should imagine for a quiet...I should think, as mum sees it and it's the easy way out all the time.

Interviewer: They probably learn a bit from telly?

Mrs J: Yes, but not the right sort of stuff. If it's anything that slightly resembles education it gets switched off for something else presumably.

Interviewer: Are you ever surprised by the way they reason? Do you ever find the most unlikely kids...work things out...

Mrs J: Just occasionally.... You often find a diamond in a heap.... There are odd children in my class and I've thought this one out, if they could be taken out and put somewhere else they've got possibilities, a sort of inner refinement that's very soon getting damped down. One or two....

Mrs Q gave a succinct answer when asked about the knowledge of children seen as deprived.<sup>180</sup>

Interviewer: ...how well informed are these children about the everyday facts of life?... Are they very knowledgeable in a general sense?

Mrs Q: No, in my class I've got three, perhaps, that I can rely upon to give a reasonable answer to a general knowledge question that you fling out at them....

[A change of tape caused some missed sentences.]

Interviewer: ...Do you use any sort of equipment for maths? Cuisenaire Rods....

Mrs Q: Well, that sort of thing, and fixed bricks...and bricks for counting and sharing and, yes, quite a bit of equipment... weighing equipment and so on, as and when they need to use it...in conjunction with the work.

Interviewer: And those who do this sort of reasoning...presumably it comes out, does it?

Mrs Q: Yes, it does in the maths especially, well, and in their language and in the way they answer questions generally.... Some have got it and....

Interviewer: Do you ever come across problems when you are talking with them? Say there is a problem...kids of this age are very curious; is there, you know, 'we must solve this problem' sort of attitude? Have you come across that?

Mrs O: No, not really.

Interviewer: They are happy for you to tell them?

Mrs O: They do ask questions but I think probably their ability to form a question is fairly limited and so they don't know what question to ask quite often, so they don't ask it.

Interviewer: And this comes from the home, doesn't it?...in certain home backgrounds quite early on kids are being helped to formulate questions.

Mrs O: It's just a case that they just accept things rather than... make their own stimulation and question-asking and so on. I think they are just told to accept things at home or shut up.

Speaking of infants seen as deprived and who were inclined to be a nuisance in school, Mrs T said:-<sup>181</sup>

But those sort of children need more concentration...they've got butterfly minds; they might be bright in many ways. They might be brighter than the rest of the group but don't apply themselves.

Towards the end of this interview she usefully contributed thus:-

Mrs T: I mean to me anyway, because I'm mostly concerned with<sup>182</sup> reading which is an extension of language development, it's a lack of conversation, the complete inability to put their thoughts into words. They give you half a sentence.... This is what makes it such hard work you see. And quite a surprising number of children have speech defects: now I've asked the speech therapists and they can't tell how much of this is due to laziness or lack of correction at home. You know if you start them off as babies speaking more clearly...but it's hard to say isn't it what caused it? But it's amazing how many have difficulties with doing the single sounds because of that, even the single sounds you see. A little girl who - she started to analyse her words - she said "yeh" for "yel" (i.e., "yeyow" for "yellow").

Interviewer: Do you think that speech training as such is an important thing that could overcome this sort of deprivation?

Mrs T: Nothing overcomes deprivation.

Interviewer: No, but this is language deprivation we are talking about really, aren't we? This is lack of language to come to school with - or speech rather than language. They aren't quite the same are they? But this little girl you are speaking of: would it help if someone spent a long time helping her to pronounce words?

Mrs T: I've tried: that's what I'm training her to do.... Mind you we do send children to speech therapy. And we have contacts there...but it's the same as everything else, isn't it, the best place for this is in the home.

(The above dialogue relates usefully to Miss S's experiences with Jimmy, recounted above - Reference 174.)

As was declared at the beginning of this section, the children in Meadowland School who are seen as deprived are not seen as having the kind of ability needed for them to achieve at school. The evidence offered above leaves the researcher in little doubt that this is the reality of the situation as far as teaching staff are concerned and the fact that a kind of E.P.A. status has now been conferred upon the school by the County Education Authority does much to confirm their belief. Whether this special status will help the children to achieve better in their teachers' eyes remains to be seen but there would seem to be a danger that it will confirm the teachers' impressions. An interesting aspect of the evidence offered, however, is that it does include a few suggestions about unrealised potential: perhaps only one of the witnesses staunchly adheres to optimism in this respect, that is Mr H, but Mrs T offers some intelligent pointers in this direction.

#### Social organisation and social skills

Already a good deal has been said by witnesses about the lack of organisation in the lives of children seen as deprived and they have shown little doubt that these young people are being ill-prepared for life in the kind of adult society found acceptable to teachers and other professional people.

Much of the evidence so far produced concerning the families and home lives of the children being considered has pointed in this direction; in fact, quite apart from statements which appeared in Chapter 3, the testimonies used in examining each of the assumptions upon which this



present chapter is based have included material which indicates unsatisfactory home lives and poor social training.

Domestic routines have been seen as erratic: bedtimes and times for getting up have frequently been shown as irregular and inappropriate to the children concerned, mealtimes have often been vague and in a few cases virtually non-existent: in some cases eating has been shown to be perfunctory, without any regard being given to a balanced and wholesome diet. Sleeping arrangements have on occasion been shown as little short of chaotic. In many instances there seems to have been little order in budgeting, shopping and housework. Discipline in the home has been seen to fluctuate between something akin to brutality at one extreme to a complete lack of any semblance of parental control at the other.

Miss S made a point about the accident-proneness of her deprived children, saying, in the company of some of her pupils (Notes 22/4), 'We have quite a lot of accidents...because we are careless'. The child addressed and the onlookers looked wan and apathetic. Quite apart from the moral considerations proffered earlier in this chapter, relationships described within some homes would suggest there must have been a degree of confusion for the young people living in them. Loyalties, we have been told, tend to be strong within the so-called deprived households but there is sufficient evidence in the testimonies of key witnesses to suggest that, although children in such situations are incredibly resilient, (\* see below) the fact of muddled relationships has in some instances clearly had a direct bearing upon school progress and overall attainment.

(\* Miss S<sup>183</sup> told of a child who had swapped both mother and father and had linked up into a new family where "it was happy and smiling and working quite well...why is it doing this? You know it ought to be throwing everything about. We have one or two who do conform...and throw things".\*\*

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\*\* Miss S tended to use this style of speech but it is most unlikely that she applied any kind of moralising pressure upon her charges. She impressed as being a kindly, firm and markedly child-centred teacher.

It all seemed to depend upon how acceptable the child found him or herself to be in the particular home situation.)

Tolerance of crime and dishonesty have been indicated as has a disregard for property, including own belongings. Surprisingly there has been only passing mention of drink and drunkenness among the people of the Meadowland Estate: in fact there are no public houses on the estate itself but hostelries are to be found nearby on the Salem Road. Bingo has been presented as a villainous influence a few times and gambling with cards has fleetingly appeared.

The extent of perceived social disorganisation is difficult to measure in any precise way but a majority of the witnesses (probably 80 per cent) seemed convinced of its existence. It is interesting to look away from the Meadowland Estate towards the more socially privileged village of Blair to gain a comparative perspective. Mr X, Head of Blair County Primary School, had few problems of the sort attributable to deprivation, except perhaps for those related to the kinds of unawareness of children's needs sometimes met with amongst middle-class parents busily pursuing their careers and life styles and a few notoriously neglectful country families.\* In the other privileged school catchment area experienced by Mrs J in Hertfordshire there do not even seem to have been these problems. She stated:-<sup>184</sup>

those youngsters never lacked for a thing - if parents were not about then their every need was looked after, in many cases there was always an au pair girl on the premises.

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\* The short time spent at Blair Primary School means that any comparisons of this kind, based mainly upon the Head's testimony, can only be very general and impressionistic. A reader of this thesis has drawn attention to the condition of notoriety mentioned above in relation to certain 'neglectful country families': it is suggested that the comparative levels necessary to attain notoriety in country districts as opposed to housing estates are probably very different, thus making significant comparison difficult.

Meadowland Primary School on the other hand would seem to have all the problems attributable to deprivation.

Although the symptoms of social disorganisation have been identified by witnesses in Meadowland families right across the sample of children seen as deprived, Mr Ho, the school's acting head, spoke of seven families in particular whose names appeared again and again whenever forms of deprivation were being considered.<sup>185</sup> Remembering the number of pupils seen as deprived by staff members, at least one-third of the school roll, it is interesting that seven 'problem families' should have made such an impression. Why certain families rather than others have an impact upon the consciousness of teachers and other adults involved with the welfare of deprived children living on the Meadowland Estate will be a point to consider when reading the concluding chapter.

The lack of social skills amongst the Meadowland children seen as deprived has been made apparent by a number of witnesses; the use of language is clearly a key area to be considered in this respect and there have been many references which relate in the evidence produced, particularly under 'ability'. Mr Q, the City's educational psychologist,<sup>186</sup> reported that Meadowland children were 'under-developed verbally' and this has been confirmed by all the teachers interviewed. It is clear too that witnesses have found a certain uncouthness in other areas than language and perhaps the most noticeable efforts have been made to redress the balance against their 'deprived' charges in the school dining hall. As reported earlier,<sup>187</sup> the Head and his Deputy were determined to provide a 'civilised and enjoyable' mealtime for these children, many of whom never sat down in this way for a meal at home - how could they if, as was sometimes the case, their house did not contain a dining table?

This last point requires that the discussion should move quite

definitely to a consideration of cultural norms as revealed by witnesses telling of the deprivation perceived in the catchment area of Meadowland Primary School. The concluding proposals are concerned with the concept of 'a worthwhile culture' and 'appreciation of the good things in life'.

A. V Children seen as lacking a worthwhile culture and having little appreciation of the good things in life

Like the first four, this final statement suggested itself during the course of early enquiries into the topic area but, unlike the others, it has not lent itself to straightforward examination making use of the collected data. Clearly, the main reason for this is that, whereas the evidence offered under the first four general headings has related explicitly to the topics under consideration, the references to 'worthwhile culture' and 'the good things in life' have tended to be vague but nevertheless often strikingly implicit in what has been said.

There is a temptation at the outset of this section to consult the literature and attempt to define terms more precisely but this must be resisted: it has to be remembered yet again that the purpose of Chapter 4 is to report the impressions of interview subjects as they consider the nature of the deprivation they perceive to exist amongst their pupils and clients. The terms 'culture' and 'good things of life' must be interpreted so as to fit the implications of the testimonies offered though, clearly, it is inevitable that the researcher will, to a degree, read into these testimonies his own version of what is understood by 'worthwhile culture' and 'the good things of life'.

There can be little doubt that the majority of the witnesses interviewed deprecated the way of life (and, surely, whatever definition is used 'culture' has to be about ways of life?) of the people they saw as deprived and regretted that the very attitudes of the deprived prevented them from appreciating so much that was, in their view,

worthwhile.\* This may not have been so throughout all the interviews but, apart from one or two instances (notably when Mr H and Mrs T were contributing), even when local ways were being spoken of with approval perhaps full credit was not always given. This could be seen when, for example, the Meadowland Estate's social hall was being discussed during an interview.<sup>188</sup>

Mr I (Head of Meadowland Primary School) was sure that the estate warranted every possible help from the education and other authorities and cited as an example of potential local enterprise the social hall built by the residents and completed some five years ago. [It is only since this interviewing that the researcher has come to recognise the communal significance of this hall.]

On the other hand Mrs X, Assistant Planner, suspected that there was very much more substance to aspirations for community recognition by the Meadowland Estate-dwellers than was generally realised. She recounted how a former employee of the Planning Office had lived on the Estate and consciously taken on the life-style of the locals - upsetting some of the more staid members of the Department in so doing. In the year he lived there he had learnt a great deal about the people of Meadowland and found them to be real and aware citizens: he managed to become involved in a local free press. It has not been possible to discover further details of this free press and it is assumed to have been a short-lived enterprise: the teachers interviewed have certainly not had knowledge of significant community action and their testimonies in this regard have only covered odd items such as a school fete organised largely by parents<sup>190</sup> as was the annual harvest festival. There was not a parent-teacher association as such for Meadowland School but, as mentioned earlier, there did exist a group called Friends of the School.<sup>191</sup>

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\* What the teacher-witnesses saw as worthwhile can be elicited from the testimonies used in discussion of the A statements.

which included parents but also allowed charitable residents from better-endowed parts of the City to help in fund-collecting ventures and in the organisation of school functions and journeys.<sup>192</sup>

The teachers interviewed were asked whether the local people appreciated the school and Mrs O's response<sup>193</sup> was typical.

I think they're just indifferent. Yes, it's just one of those things.

However, she did go on to detail certain expectations local people had of the school.

They expect the staff to sort out disputes between children and other children and they expect the school to get their children to read and they expect certain things of the school...and they're up in arms perhaps if these things don't happen, but they don't really expect it to fail perhaps ever. They're very keen to have positive things happen rather than negative things. But they wouldn't make use of the school or expect to do things in the school.

She thought too that parents could be moved if a William Tyndale situation were to arise.

...they have very set ideas, they're inflexible, you could imagine them storming up here in arms somehow. Perhaps they wouldn't but there are one or two large mouthed types that, if they think anything is wrong, are very keen to put their rights forward and so on.

Other witnesses did not think a vital concern in the activities of the school was likely to appear: a very few parents wanting to help children with their reading seemed about the extent of normal involvement. All complained about the poor attendance at a recent parents' evening.

Miss S<sup>194</sup> saw little evidence of any kind of local culture. There was a certain amount of togetherness generated at the bingo club (run by a local volunteer in a rented hall) and certain cliques frequented certain pubs. The children tended to have what the lower strata of the City had, but were very much cut off because of the expensive bus journey. Many of the younger ones seldom got even as far as the City.

Mrs Q has already been quoted with regard to cultural factors; for example, her mention of 'culturally deprived language background',<sup>195</sup> 'if you are a better person',<sup>196</sup> 'politeness',<sup>197</sup> and it being 'the cultural thing to stay at home'.<sup>198</sup> In the last case she acknowledged

It must be an atmosphere which they enjoy.... I suppose it's quite friendly in a funny sort of way.

She then compared the neighbourhood with her childhood home.<sup>199</sup>

I lived in Croydon as a child and I feel it is more tranquil down here...somehow the pace is slower....

Others had acknowledged the slower pace of life, but not as a desirable feature of the district.

When Mrs Q claimed that the Meadowland people spent their money on 'the wrong things' and that they just didn't 'know how to use it',<sup>199</sup> she did eventually qualify her statement with:-

When I say they don't know how to use it, that's not fair really, is it? Because they use it how they want to. Perhaps it's us who don't know how to use our money.

Like other members of the Meadowland School staff, Mrs Q lived well away from the neighbourhood. The following dialogue elaborates:-<sup>199</sup>

Interviewer: How well do you know this district, I mean do you know people living near the school? Have you ever been to any local functions?

Mrs Q: Not really, no. I don't know it very well at all.... I live in Turner Holme (a village some three miles outside the City)....

Interviewer: Oh, yes, that's well in the country, isn't it?

Mrs Q: No, there aren't many things going on round here one would be drawn by anyway.... I wouldn't want to live on top of the area anyway, I mean you don't particularly want to see the children outside school hours the whole time, and so on, you become too involved with them.\*

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\* Teachers' involvement within the communities in which they teach could form the basis of a useful follow-up study to the one here being pursued.

Before the current project was started the researcher had heard from Mr Uy, then Head of the Edward Gorton S.M. School,<sup>200</sup> that a cultural feature of the City was that it was a great place for the family, this applied also to the outlying housing estates. In spite of the evidence offered concerning considerable social disorganisation subjects have touched upon the closeness of family life in a few places but there have usually been reservations about this: the following dialogue illustrates:-<sup>201</sup>

Mrs O: We do have quite a lot of illness...they get colds and things...and they get sent to school when they are below par...when they should be kept at home....

Interviewer: Do they; they get pushed off?... This is an indication of a kind of maternal deprivation I suppose, isn't it?... or is it a kind of spartan upbringing?

Mrs O: It isn't necessarily a case of parents being unsympathetic; they have to get out to work. We have had to take certain children home, they've been too ill to be at school.

Interviewer: Have you? Would there be anyone at home when they go home like this?

Mrs O: We phone up mother and she comes home from work, or father does it. Or there are others around.... It is quite a close-knit community.

Interviewer: Yes, close-knit in that sense; but is it in the strong family sense?...

Mrs O: No, I don't think they are close in the true sense of close and affectionately close, but they will look after each others' families...they have sometimes got mothers in other parts of the City.\*

Mrs J has already been quoted as saying that a general lack of loyalty to each other is a feature of the neighbourhood<sup>202</sup> and that she could not understand why young people growing up stayed around and why the few who did go away to work always returned home. Witnesses have generally

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\* This has proved a difficult area to probe: extremes of sloppiness and conflict have tended to be highlighted.



been perplexed in trying to explain signs of a family ethos in the neighbourhood and have tended to dismiss it as a strange form of sentimentality.

The attitude of Meadowland Estate-dwellers towards the 'good things of life' has been commented upon in a few interviews and the following illustrations are given to indicate some of the points of view encountered. It is clear that parents are not generally seen as introducing their children to what would be in many households normal leisure pursuits.

Mrs J:<sup>205</sup> ...then they've no books at all: I would say out of 37 perhaps only five or six, or maybe seven, have books at home.

Interviewer: Really. You mean books worth having?

Mrs J: I mean any sort of books. They might have a few newspapers, the sort with nude ladies in them....

and later:-

Well I think they just switch the television on and<sup>204</sup> leave it on until it goes off.

...they're not taken out and taken walks...there is no imagination on Sundays; they just get put in the car and taken to the nearest bit of stony sand....\*

Conversation during participant-observation periods confirmed that holiday-making was fairly unusual among Meadowland children.<sup>205</sup> Even the City swimming pool was a rare treat and water experience was often confined to paddling or 'mucking around in the pond'. A slightly different emphasis was introduced by Mrs Q:<sup>206</sup>

Interviewer: What about holidays? Some of the kids seem to get away on holidays, do they tell you much about that sort of thing?

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\* Contradictions are evident in these accounts. Clearly Mrs J did not think much of the quality of the beach she had in mind and other witnesses were not in accord about what was, for example, 'somewhere jolly nice' (Mrs Q).

Mrs Q: Only the ones that are going somewhere jolly nice, like Spain or something. I think some of them imagine they are going to these places as well.

Interviewer: That's interesting: I suppose it could be an index of deprivation this wanting to show off....

Mrs Q: Yes. But they have a little holiday quite a lot of them - days out is the usual.

Interviewer: What about the coast around here?...

Mrs Q: You hear about the occasional one who has been to Holy Sands Market - but probably not to the beach, not for the child's sake anyway... I think they live for themselves...I don't think you should live entirely for the children, but....

Throughout these enquiries there has not been a mention of a child visiting the public library, going to a museum, a theatre or even a cinema, nor has there been reference to visits to hotels or restaurants. The Cathedral has not been mentioned nor any other church, except in the case of one child who attended 'religious meetings', his mother being a Jehovah's Witness.

Perhaps the fact that most of the evidence has been collected from the children's teachers, without the balancing factor of evidence from local people,\* means that what appears to be a rather distorted assessment of 'cultural capital'<sup>207</sup> has emerged in this last section: but, in general, what is presented is certainly the view of those who live on the Meadowland Estate as presented by social gatekeepers.

The researcher has found while probing into what teachers and other professionals see as deprivation that a number of culturally-sensitive areas have been exposed: it is believed, however, that the extended use of a tape-recorder has allowed a good measure of objectivity in the

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\* As proposed earlier in this work, an enquiry seeking the views of local people on the topics discussed could form a useful follow-up study.

reporting and this should give an added confidence when 'Findings and conclusions' are being discussed in the final chapter.

#### CHAPTER 4

#### REFERENCES AND NOTES

1	Research Notes 18/1	Miss S	28.1.76
2	26B/6	Mrs J	21.5.76
3	26B/8	"	"
4	22/4	Miss S	1.4.76
5	24/5	Mrs H	7.5.76
6	24/7	"	"
7	29/4	Mrs T	20.7.76
8	30/1	Mrs Q	20.7.76
9	31/3	Mr S	5.8.76
10	18/1	Miss S	28.1.76
11	22/8	Participant-observation	1.4.76
12	22/12	"	" "
13	24/4	Mrs H	7.5.76
14	26A/2	Participant-observation	21.5.76
15	26A/4	"	" "
16	26B/6	Mrs J	21.5.76
17	26B/7	"	"
18	26C/11/16/17	Mrs Q	21.5.76
19	28/3/4	Mrs J	20.7.76
20	30/3	Mrs Q	20.7.76
21	31/2	Mr S	5.8.76
22	7/3	Mr Q	8.8.75
23	7/4	"	"

24	Research Notes 12/2	Mr X	6.10.75
25	17/1	Mr Ho	23.1.76
26	34/1	Mr Ta	18.11.76
27	18/1	Miss S	28.1.76
28	12/2	Mr X	6.10.75
29	28/1/2	Mrs J	20.7.76
30	25/4	Mr H	7.5.76
31	29/6/7	Mrs T	20.7.76
32	30/1	Mrs Q	20.7.76
33	30/6	"	"
34	31/1	Mr S	5.8.76
35	33/1	Mrs X	6.10.76
36	17/1	Mr Ho	28.1.76
37	22/3	Participant-observation	1.4.76
38	22/7	"	" "
39	26A/2	"	" 21.5.76
40	25/2	Mr H	7.5.76
41	28/6	Mrs J	20.7.76
42	29/4	Mrs T	20.7.76
43	28/5	Mrs J	20.7.76
44	11/2	Mr Ho	6.10.75
45	18/1	Miss S	28.1.76
46	22/3	Participant-observation	1.4.76
47	22/7	"	" "
48	26A/2	"	" 21.5.76
49	22/5	"	" 1.4.76
50	26B/6	Mrs J	21.5.76
51	28/2	"	20.7.76

52	Research Notes 26/8/11	Mrs Q	21.5.76
53	30/3	"	20.7.76
54	38/2	Mr Bb and Mrs W	6.1.77
55	11/1	Mr Mo	6.10.75
56	18/3	Miss S	23.1.76
57	28/3	Mrs J	20.7.76
58	22/11	Participant-observation	1.4.76
59	23/II(4)	"	" "
60	25/3	Mr H	7.5.76
61	30/2/3	Mrs Q	20.7.76
62	43/1/2	Mr I	22.2.77
63	24/7/8	Mrs H	7.5.76
64	25/3	Mr H	7.5.76
65	31/2	Mr S	5.8.76
66	22/3	Participant-observation	1.4.76
67	22/9	"	" "
68	22/11	"	" "
69	22/6	"	" "
70	24/4	Mrs H	7.5.76
71	31/3	Mr S	5.8.76
72	32/3	Mr T	11.8.76
73	39/1/2	Miss F	19.1.77
74	39/6	"	"
75	19/1	Mrs J	23.1.76
76	18/1	Miss S	23.1.76
77	22/10	Participant-observation	1.4.76
78	26A/1	"	" 21.5.76
79	22/13	"	" 1.4.76
80	24/6	Mrs H	7.5.76

81	Research Notes 25/1	Mr H	7.5.76
82	25/2	"	"
83	26B/7	Mrs J	21.5.76
84	28/2	"	20.7.76
85	28/5	"	"
86	26C/15	Mrs Q	21.5.76
87	30/2	Mrs Q	20.7.76
88	29/4	Mrs T	20.7.76
89	29/5/6	"	"
90	31/1	Mr S	5.8.76
91	11/1	Mr Mo	6.10.75
92	22/9	Participant-observation 1.4.76	
93	28/6	Mrs J	20.7.76
94	30/5	Mrs Q	20.7.76
95	30/7	"	"
96	31/2	Mr S	5.8.76
97	34/1	Mr Ta	18.11.76
98	(County) Gazette, 2.9.77		
99	Research Notes 5/1/2	Mr B	25.6.75
100	5/4	"	"
101	11/2	Mr Mo and Miss S	6.10.75
102	12/1	Mr X	6.10.75
103	18/2	Misc S	28.1.76
104	22/2	Participant-observation 1.4.76	
105	22/7	"	" "
106	22/9	"	" "
107	24/8	Mrs H	7.5.76
108	25/4	Mr H	7.5.76

109	Research Notes 26B/5	Mrs J	21.5.76
110	26B/8	"	"
111	26B/8	"	"
112	28/2	"	20.7.76
113	28/4	"	"
114	26C/11	Mrs Q	21.5.76
115	26C/12	"	"
116	29/4	Mrs T	20.7.76
117	29/4	"	"
118	30/4	Mrs Q	20.7.76
119	30/7	"	"
120	30/7/8	"	"
121	30/3	Miss F	19.1.77
122	11/1	Mr Mo	6.10.75
123	18/3	Miss S	28.1.76
124	25/3	Mr H	7.5.76
125	24/4	Mrs H	7.5.76
126	19/2	Mrs J	28.1.76
127	26B/7	Mrs J	21.5.76
128	28/1	Mrs J	20.7.76
129	28/6	"	"
130	26C/17	Mrs Q	21.5.76
131	29/2	Mrs T	20.7.76
132	32/3	Mr T	11.8.76
133	38/2	Mr Bb	6.1.77
134	22/3	Mrs J	20.7.76
135	31/2	Mr S	5.8.76
136	32/3	Mr T	11.8.76

137	Research Notes	260/13/15	Mrs Q	21.5.76
138		24/9	Mrs H	7.5.76
139		22/6	Participant-observation	1.4.76
140		24/6	Mrs H	7.5.76
141		24/1	"	"
142		29/3	Mrs T	20.7.76
143		22/8	Participant-observation	1.4.76
144		28/4	Mrs J	20.7.76
145		30/4/5	Mrs Q	20.7.76
146		30/12	"	"
147		34/1/2	Mr Ta	18.11.76
148		28/3	Mrs J	20.7.76
149		260/17/18	Mrs Q	21.5.76
150		28/1	Mrs J	20.7.76
151	Williamson, B and Byrne, D 'Research, Theory and Policy in Education' in O.U. Course E352 <u>Education, Economy and Politics</u> , Block 5.			
152	Research Notes	7/3	Mr Q	8.8.75
153		12/1	Mr X	6.10.75
154		18/2	Miss S	28.1.76
155		22/7	Participant-observation	1.4.76
156		22/8	"	"
157		24/7	Mrs H	7.5.76
158		260/16	Mrs Q	21.5.76
159		30/9	Mrs Q	20.7.76
160		23/6	Mrs J	20.7.76
161		7/7	Mr Q	8.8.75
162		11/2	Mr No	6.10.75
163		17/1	Mr No	28.1.76



164	Research Notes 19/1	Mrs J	28.1.76
165	19/2	"	"
166	12/3	Mr X	6.10.75
167	24/1	Mrs H	7.5.76
168	25/1	Mr H	7.5.76
169	26C/12	Mrs Q	21.5.76
170	24/8	Mrs H	7.5.76
171	29/2/3	Mrs T	20.7.76
172	Postman, N 'The politics of reading' in Keddie, N <u>Tinker, Tailor....</u> , Penguin, 1973, p. 95.		
	'I want to close with this thought: teachers of reading represent an important pressure group. They may not agree that they are a sinister political group. But I should think they would want to ask at least a few questions before turning to consider the techniques of teaching reading. These questions would be: "What is reading good for?" "What is it better or worse than?" "What are my motives for promoting it?" And the ultimate political question of all "Whose side am I on?".'		
173	Research Notes 24/8	Mrs H	7.5.76
174	22/6	Participant-observation	1.4.76
175	25/1	Mr H	7.5.76
176	25/3	"	"
177	25/2	"	"
178	26C/12	Mrs Q	21.5.76
179	28/6	Mrs J	20.7.76
180	30/8	Mrs Q	20.7.76
181	29/3	Mrs T	20.7.76
182	29/7	"	"
183	22/11/12	Participant-observation	1.4.76
184	19/1	Mrs J	28.1.76
185	17/1	Mr Mo	28.1.76
186	7/3	Mr Q	8.8.75

187	Research Notes 22/12	Participant-observation 1.4.76	
188	43/2	Mr I	22.2.77
189	33/1	Mrs X	6.10.76
190	30/8	Mrs Q	20.7.76
191	260/14	Mrs Q	21.5.76
192	11/2	Mr Mo	6.10.75
193	30/11	Mrs Q	20.7.76
194	18/2	Miss S	28.1.76
195	260/12	Mrs Q	21.5.76
196	260/18	Mrs Q	21.5.76
197	30/4/5	"	20.7.76
198	30/9	"	"
199	30/10	"	"
200	Meeting with Mr Uy on 17.7.73		
201	Research Notes 260/11	Mrs Q	21.5.76
202	28/6	Mrs J	20.7.76
203	28/1	"	"
204	28/2	"	"
205	22/3	Participant-observation 1.4.76	
206	260/13	Mrs Q	21.5.76
207	Bourdieu, P 'The school as a conservative force: scholastic and cultural inequalities' in Eggleson, J (ed) <u>Contemporary Research in the Sociology of Education</u> , Methuen, 1974.		

## CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

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## CHAPTER 5

### FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Having received messages from the literature selected for comment in the first chapter and considered the criteria and demographic evidence in Chapter 3, the reader may well have found the testimonies offered in Chapter 4 leading inexorably towards the stereotype of a deprived child with the givers of those testimonies seldom pausing to ponder... 'how many able and even brilliant children are never recognised in our schools because of the circumstances of their home lives'.<sup>\*1</sup> It is necessary, therefore, to reflect upon what has been reported and to see what may legitimately be drawn from the material presented.

In the course of examining each of the statements set down under 'A' at the beginning of Chapter 4 some general conclusions have been offered based upon the evidence produced. The conclusions begin each section or subsection but, in some cases, it has been found necessary to include elsewhere in the text further concluding statements to clarify particular parts of the narrative. Sufficient has been said in these passages to show a considerable degree of support amongst the subjects interviewed for each of the propositions listed. These are bald statements it may be protested and they might seem to demand some kind of quantitative response but, as has been explained in Chapter 2, such an

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\* This extract from a 1970 Guardian article concerning the Schools Council Working Paper 27, is, perhaps, couched in terms that present an improbable picture as far as the perceived ability of Meadowland children is concerned. However, the words might be meaningfully related to what Mr H and possibly Mrs T have been saying.

approach was not to be adopted for the reporting of field work and so testing has had to be qualitative in nature and rest to a considerable extent upon individual interpretation; a narrative with dialogue presentation has been seen as appropriate. However, the number of respondents is relatively small and, after noting the author's general conclusions for each section and reflecting upon what is contained in this chapter, it is hoped that the reader will again scrutinise the evidence presented - narrative, dialogue, field-note extracts, comments - with a view to reaching his or her own conclusions. The nature of the research here reported does not allow for the statements to be proved or disproved in any tidy way but it is contended that, while views about deprivation held by teachers and other professionals concerned with the education and welfare of children usually remain implicit and unexamined, the testimonies presented in Chapter 4 provide a unique opportunity to consider the thoughts of these social gatekeepers on the concept and to contemplate the possible consequences of such thinking. It has not been the aim to establish 'grounded theory'<sup>2</sup> but rather to illustrate within existing theoretical frameworks\* and, hopefully, to lead towards a position where operational advice may be offered which will be of particular significance for teachers working in areas seen as deprived.

The practical implications of seeing some children as deprived had not generally been considered by the subjects interviewed but the researcher went into the various schoolroom and office interview settings with a number of preconceptions gained from preliminary study. Even so, those interviewed were seldom in any doubt about what they understood to be

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\* The purpose of presenting different theoretical frameworks in Ch. 1 was to provide a basis for discussion of the testimonies offered by witnesses. Readers may judge that the deficit/difference model has been allowed to dominate the linking narrative.

'deprivation'. This seems to be a crucial point: where do ideas about deprivation come from? Clearly subjects' personal biographies are a factor and this has been illustrated in previous chapters but the wider 'social structural forces' mentioned by Sharp and Green in the following passage will certainly need to be considered.

Our intention was to attempt to study and demonstrate some of the more or less subtle ways in which wider social structural "forces" impinge upon or influence the pedagogy and other social processes at the level of the classroom and the school.<sup>3</sup>

Also,

Their (i.e., the teachers') rationales have strong undertones of deprivation and social pathology perspectives towards their clients which legitimise their therapeutic ideology.<sup>4</sup>

The teacher-witnesses of Meadowland School generally showed themselves to be sympathetic toward the messages of Plowden; the school would hardly have been picked out so readily as Mapledene Lane School - used in the Sharp and Green research - as an example of a child-centred school but there can be little doubt that these teachers were caring, on the whole hard-working and keen to do the best they could for their charges. The evidence presented in Chapter 4, however, makes it probable that their conceptions of deprivation sometimes prevented the children they saw as deprived from receiving the full benefit of their professional competences. This statement raises a sensitive issue which is well described in Ahier's article 'Professions and ideologies'.<sup>5</sup> In the first paragraph he states

In some senses the sociologists appear parasitic upon the practitioners, for it is in the latter's places of work which they often study and their presuppositions which they analyse

but he goes on to offer justifications which may be seen to relate to this study.

More seriously it is the educators' field of action and moral concern which is pre-given and thus invites all forms of sociological empiricism.

Later in the article he considers how sociological studies of this kind are not always just non-evaluating impressions of the activities of professionals in their institutional life and he cites Hargreaves's paper<sup>6</sup> presenting his interactionist approach to deviance in schools - the terms 'deviance' and 'deprivation', though not synonymous, it was suggested in Chapter 1 are often used in close conjunction. Hargreaves sees one of the effects of turning from the 'common sense' view of a problem is to be seen as representing pupils as victims and teachers as 'malicious persecutors'. He adds 'No useful purpose will be served by accusing or attacking teachers in a gratuitous manner but nor will it be fruitful to persist in traditional attitudes of uncritical sympathy for teachers'.\* The author taught for fifteen years in state schools<sup>7</sup> and it is highly probable that his own conception of deprivation during that time impeded his teaching as far as pupils he saw as deprived were concerned. Hence it is crucial that the evidence here available should be studied so that there will be no doubt about the factors seen by witnesses to contribute to a child's 'deprived' status.

In the last chapter sufficient has been shown through extracts from the transcripts of recorded interviews and other field notes to confirm that characteristics listed in A.I to A.V are perceived in some measure

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\* A reader of this thesis queries whether 'uncritical sympathy' is, in fact, the traditional attitude (Hargreaves). As a teacher the author encountered both 'uncritical sympathy' and the kind of gratuitous attack discouraged by Hargreaves: he is convinced that the greatest help educational researchers can give practising teachers is the encouragement of informed discussion on identified issues - such as the subject of this thesis. It is contended that busy classroom teachers do need to be alerted to such issues and provided with the opportunity of discussing them. (See below, under 'Operational advice'.)

when the label 'deprived child' is used by a teacher or other involved professional. The testimonies suggest that A.I - A.V do not need to be equally in evidence for the label to be assigned: in fact, one or more of the numbered categories could well be seen as inapplicable yet the label still be used. If none of the categories were seen to apply yet still the label was used then further categories would need to be devised and similarly used. In the following an attempt is made to assess the relative importance of the listed characteristics in the building up of a deprived child image.

#### A. I (a) Children seen as poorly clad

Clearly, physical appearance tends to have an instant impact upon most adults concerned with education and welfare: the evidence suggests, however, that the Meadowland teachers in particular were often moved to sympathy when discussing their charges' inadequate and/or inappropriate clothing. It would be difficult to read anything condemnatory into the testimonies of Miss 'S', Mrs 'J', Mrs 'H', Mrs 'T' and Mrs 'Q' and, apart from the occasional comment about the failure of mothers to repair clothing, it may be said that these witnesses pitied the families concerned and acknowledged the presence of poverty when contributing to this topic. Some witnesses have in fact been able to distinguish individual children and exonerate them from stigma imputed to the family. Mr 'S', however, put a different slant on things when he declared that there was almost always sufficient money coming into the home but it was invariably being misused and appropriate clothing for children had a low priority - that is, it was 'secondary poverty' that existed, of the kind condemned in the massive poverty surveys at the turn of the century.

From the evidence collected on this topic it is difficult to equate the thinking of the Meadowland teachers with the views expressed by



Galbraith (see Chapter 1, Note 13) at the start of the discussion on whether poverty in Britain is generally seen as a condition or a trait. To most of these teachers the poverty revealed by the lack of adequate clothing was a condition: to the Senior Education Welfare Officer this poverty was essentially a trait.

#### A. I (b) Children seen as ill-fed

Contributions selected for inclusion in this section again came from Mrs 'Q', Mr 'S', Mrs 'H', Miss 'S' and Mrs 'J' but differences in attitude are discernible. All saw the diet of the children under discussion at home as quite unsatisfactory and saw the provision of a school meal as important - although Mrs 'Q' did have reservations about the nutritional adequacy of the food on offer at school. It was stated in Chapter 4 that these witnesses' conception of deprivation included a stereotype uncaring/incompetent mother as far as the preparation of nutritional meals was concerned. It is interesting to note that no witnesses suggested that the parents of the children seen as deprived could ill-afford to buy sufficient nutritional food. Many of the children were seen as hungry during the morning and relying upon sweets and potato crisps to ease hunger pangs at break-time. Witnesses were generally condemnatory of the lack of organisation in many of the homes which they clearly saw as a factor in the undernourished state of their pupils: this was not seen as a manifestation of poverty; in fact, as shown elsewhere, some felt the parents of many children taking free school meals could well afford to pay.

#### A. I (c) Children seen as unsatisfactorily housed

Children seen as deprived by the witnesses contributing to this section - Mr 'Q', Mr 'X', Miss 'S', Mr 'No', Mrs 'J', Mr 'H', Mrs 'T', Mrs 'Q' and Mrs 'S' - were generally thought to be most adequately housed,

as far as availability of buildings was concerned, but often their parents were not seen to be managing very well in respect of sleeping arrangements, general household organisation and maintenance: the fact of large families (see Chapter 3) and the perceived transitory nature of relationships were seen as contributing factors. The question of poverty scarcely arose as such in discussions on this topic but some witnesses told how residents of the Meadowland Estate were often former tenants of other City housing estates who had got into arrears with rent, or had otherwise come to be labelled 'bad tenants'. (This is developed in Chapter 3.) More than one witness emphasised that families which 'had something about them' were usually able to move out of the neighbourhood.

A. I (d) Children seen as having insufficient sleep

Extracts from the testimonies of Miss 'S', Mr 'Mo', Mrs 'J', Mrs 'Q', Mr 'Bb' and Mrs 'W' have been used in Chapter 4 in the section on this topic. All these witnesses were convinced that the children they saw as deprived had too little sleep and the following were seen as contributing factors:

watching late evening television programmes;

disturbance from brothers and sisters - both younger and older siblings being mentioned;

pets in the bedroom;

cramped sleeping conditions;

quarrelling adults - Mrs 'J's' contribution in which she talks about them not getting 'the right quality of sleep' seems particularly revealing. It will be remembered from the Chapter 4 quotation that she continues:

because some of them have dreadful rows in the house...  
it's very disturbing going to bed, they might get a good thump to go to bed with and perhaps a good thump to get up with...

The very hot weather being experienced at the time of this interviewing was also seen as an exacerbating factor in the conditions described.

There seemed to be an underlying objection to the lack of 'proper bedtimes' when this topic was being discussed and once again the spectre of social disorganisation was never far away.

A. I (c) Children seen as having indifferent health

It is material from interviews with Mr 'Mo', Miss 'S', Mrs 'J', Mr 'H', Mrs 'Q', Mrs 'H' and Mr 'S' that is included in the Chapter 4 section on this topic.

Not a great deal was said by these witnesses about specific illnesses or disabilities and it is, of course, difficult to establish ill-health and good health, let alone make diagnoses, yet they all left a firm impression with the researcher that the children they saw as deprived did not enjoy robust health. It is submitted that the teachers' attitudes towards the perceived health of these families is most significant. As was said in Chapter 4

...much was said about what amounted to unhealthy attitudes towards more wholesome ways of life.

Meadowland teachers quoted examples of laxity on the part of parents as far as medical attention was concerned and showed their concern to involve parents more closely in the children's medical - and dental - needs. Absolute neglect was not usual but the inconsistency noticed under other topics was again perceived by witnesses. Mrs 'Q's' testimony (Chapter 4, Note 61) well illustrates occasional apathy rather than neglect, followed by ill-considered and unnecessary urgency and later she shows a rallying round of family and friends when a child is found to be really sick. Such cases are difficult to evaluate on this hearsay basis, of course, because of serious problems of criteria and evidence, but it does need remembering again that it is the way in which witnesses have interpreted such things that is the concern of this enquiry.

Probably most teachers find the health of their pupils a constant potential worry but it would seem from the evidence of this sample that those whose charges are seen as deprived feel particularly vulnerable in that there is less chance of real sickness being identified before the child arrives at school. Frustration and a deal of resentment was discernible among teacher-witnesses in this respect.

A. I (f) Children seen as suffering from a general sense of insecurity

The following witnesses provided evidence used in the Chapter 4 discussion of this topic:

. Miss 'S', Mrs 'H', Mr 'S', Mr 'T', Miss 'F', Mr 'Ta' and Mr 'Ho'.

The children encountered by the researcher during participant-observation periods with remedial groups at Meadowland Primary School provided some examples (see Chapter 4, Notes 66-69) of what the witnesses meant when they alluded to this general sense of insecurity but perhaps Mrs 'H's' account of Andrew (Chapter 4, Note 70) best points up the detail of how a 'deprived child' may be perceived as insecure in the unsettled circumstances described. Another example is given by the Senior Education Welfare Officer (Chapter 4, Note 71) and testimonies from the local D.H.S.S. Manager and the Women's Aid Secretary as well as a County Social Worker provide a convincing background to the impressions of the teachers. Clearly the latter saw their role as creating a settled environment in which their pupils could feel sufficiently secure to make progress with school work. The researcher saw indications that some of the children perceived as deprived did gain a sense of security from their teachers. Miss 'S' was keen that this should be the case but other teachers were not so sure that it was a good thing to relate too closely to their children.

Miss 'S' told how she had been taught at training college to keep children scrupulously at arm's length in the classroom but she was certain that deprived children had to be reached physically before they could respond emotionally and be given the confidence to work effectively.<sup>8</sup>

This sense of insecurity theme has been brought into question in parts of the Chapter 4 narrative, and elsewhere, and in discussing this material one does need to be aware that many of the points made could be made equally well about primary school children anywhere. The reader of this thesis mentioned above wondered whether such a particular sense of insecurity did exist among children seen as deprived. Was it rather that imagination and adventurousness existed amongst these as other children and that perhaps they were experiencing a secure but dull life on the Meadowland Estate?

Comments on this section are concluded with an extract from field notes made after an interview with the Senior Education Welfare Officer:

Mr 'S' confirms what other respondents have told me concerning the inconsistency in love and discipline within "deprived homes". Many children from such home backgrounds, he finds, feel secure in the primary school but do not always develop the kind of self-discipline needed to carry them through the secondary school successfully.

[Chapter 4, Note 71].

(It is acknowledged that the Senior EWO's evidence has been largely impressionistic and in only a few instances have his testimonies shown the immediacy of the essentially school-based accounts of the teachers.)

#### A. I General comment

Thus it can be seen that although some sympathy has been expressed by witnesses for children seen as suffering from the physical aspects of deprivation postulated under A.I, it is widely believed that any manifestations of poverty show it to be of a secondary kind.\* Witnesses

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\* That is, the kind of poverty that carries a judgemental factor - evident in the massive poverty surveys of Booth and Rowntree at the turn of the century.

have been almost unanimously of the opinion that it is within the home that most of the reasons for the aspects of deprivation listed at A.I truly lie. Nevertheless, there is some doubt as to whether all the characteristics listed under A.I need to be in evidence for these witnesses to allocate the label 'deprived child'.

#### A. II Children seen as shabby, unclean and unattractive

It was suggested under this heading in the last chapter that the identification of these characteristics was an indication of one of the ways in which society responds to children seen as deprived: 'respectable' folk are unlikely to conceal their response when such characteristics are perceived.

Evidence for this section was drawn from Mrs 'J', Miss 'S', Mrs 'H', Mrs 'Q', Miss 'K', Mr 'H', Mrs 'T' and Mr 'S'.

The 'deprived' appearance attributed to many of the Meadowland children often seemed to arise from comparisons made with children encountered elsewhere: Bolton, Hertford, Scunthorpe, Bradford and other parts of the country were mentioned and the view emerged that there existed 'real slums' in which sheer poverty meant that children were inevitably of ragged appearance, there were 'respectable working class' districts in which every effort was made to turn out the children as well as possible and there were middle class areas in which children were properly and sensibly attired. Children of the Meadowland Estate did not seem to fit any of these categories and it is interesting to reflect upon how the concept of 'deprivation' has crept in during recent decades when such housing estates are being discussed: the concept of the 'slum area' - as used in the Newsom Report<sup>9</sup> - has certainly endured but the subtle differences between acknowledged 'slum areas' and other perceived

'deprived areas' are seldom investigated.\*

After the slum children of Bolton encountered in her early teaching days and her more recent experience with the well-clad Hertfordshire children, Mrs 'J' found the Meadowland children quite different - they were generally 'dirty and untidy' (Chapter 4, Note 75). Miss 'S' found '...they look deprived: their clothing...they're not clean...' (Chapter 4, Note 76) and sometimes sliding standards were evident, for example,

...he seems to have become progressively dirty and poorly dressed...clothing clearly from a jumble sale...decline in appearance noticeable... [Chapter 4, Note 77]

And, noted in Mrs 'H's' Indoor Games Club:

...grubbiness of the hands and around the mouth...a usual characteristic.<sup>10</sup>

Mr 'H', it will be recalled, was reluctant to give his impressions on the appearance of children he saw as deprived and the nearest he came to offering any opinion was in response to the interviewer's 'He looks pretty scruffy, if he's the one I am thinking of'. Mr 'H's' 'Very' effectively stopped conversation about a boy who was seen by others as a walking illustration of a 'deprived child'.

Although, as already explained, Mrs 'J' found one infant child 'dirty and a real ragamuffin' (Chapter 4, Note 83) and spoke of 'dirty faces, dirty hands, and their feet...' (Chapter 4, Note 84), she stated at one point (Chapter 4, Note 83) 'they are not deprived that much with their clothes' and thought, like other witnesses, that it was in cleanliness and turn-out that the children were found to be seriously wanting. '...they just wander and muck about, filthy all the time'

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\* Herbert, D T investigated such differences in a Royal Geographical Society Conference Paper, May 1975, 'Urban deprivation: definition, measurement and spatial qualities'. The difference in the age and condition of housing is clearly a major factor but similarities in attitudes and behaviour are not always easy to account for.

Mrs 'J' declared (Chapter 4, Note 85). Mrs 'Q', it will be remembered, found the smell of some children's clothes to be quite offensive (Chapter 4, Note 86).

Mrs 'T', like Mr 'H', wanted to discount the significance of children 'coming to school in a dirty state, or in poor clothes...' (Chapter 4, Note 88) though, unlike Mr 'H', she was prepared to talk about this aspect of perceived deprivation, finding that cleanliness and tidiness were of little consequence if love was present in the home.

It is in this topic that relative standards of cleanliness and tidiness come into focus and it is interesting to reflect upon the variety of standards observable in any one sector of society. Teachers, as other professionals, inevitably vary in this respect but as a group clearly they have to subscribe to the model of a clean, well-turned-out child - many feeling that they are themselves judged upon the turnout of their pupils and to have a number of 'scruffy' children in their classrooms could be a reflection upon their professional competence. The understandable tendency to blame home circumstances has been well illustrated above but more important have been the signs of frustration prevailing within a group of professional people who genuinely believe that shabby and unclean children are unable to benefit from the tuition they are able to give. Thus it is clear that the characteristics listed at A.II will almost invariably be perceived when the label 'deprived child' is affixed.

#### A. III Children seen as destructive, violent, anti-social and immoral

If 'respectable' folk were unlikely to conceal their response when the characteristics of A.II were perceived, the characteristics here listed are certain to generate the strongest of feelings in any such company.



In this section of Chapter 4 use is made of evidence from the following subjects:

Mr 'Mo', Mrs 'J', Mrs 'Q', Mr 'S', Mr 'Ta', Mr 'B', Mr 'Ha',  
Miss 'S', Mr 'X', Mrs 'H' and Mrs 'T'.

Extracts from field notes recording participant-observation periods are also used.

That violent and destructive behaviour occurred in and around Meadowland School there can be no doubt but, from the evidence provided, it is difficult to relate such behaviour to specific children who have been identified as 'deprived' by teachers and other subjects interviewed in this research project. Even so, a strong general impression emerges from their testimonies that here is a neighbourhood in which occur many activities seen by them as anti-social and, in some cases, even immoral: the 'deprived' label is seldom in doubt as the circumstances of perceived unsatisfactory socialisation are revealed.

It will be recalled that the first part of this section in Chapter 4 is headed 'Destructive behaviour/vandalism' and here the facts of damage are well established and, quite apart from evidence of considerable external damage, Mrs 'Q's' testimony concerning such behaviour inside the school is an important clue as to pupils' perceived attitudes to property:

Well they don't have a very good respect for property in the classroom, really; they're very, very poor at looking after belongings. You know, the number of little things that get broken and misused is amazing. The turnover of equipment must be greater than in other schools for that reason, because they are poor at looking after things.

[Chapter 4, Note 94]

Although much is said about violence to the person, the next section - headed 'Violence' - shows it is much harder to establish firm facts. The following note from an interview with Miss 'S' - quoted in Chapter 4,

Note 103 - makes a useful general point:

[she] felt that the general lack of ability to communicate among the people of Meadowland was a direct cause of the many conflict situations which arose. Differences - frustration - blows. This was a common sequence amongst the adults and the children acted likewise. Feuds frequently occurred in the neighbourhood. She accepted that local people used extra-verbal symbols but she had little patience with the efficacy of restricted codes: people could either communicate in a civilised way\* or they resorted to animal brawling.

Other witnesses made similar points but there was little reference to the victims of violence.

In the last part of this section in Chapter 4 - headed 'Anti-social behaviour and low moral standards' - there are indications that current uncertainties in the wider society about behaviour norms and moral standards make it difficult for teachers and other professionals concerned with a housing estate such as Meadowland, officially recognised as 'deprived', to separate out in any satisfactory way the various aspects of behaviour which might be viewed as anti-social or immoral. The result has been that rather a hotch-potch of illustrations has emerged relating to sexual norms and practices, family stability, honesty in making claims to, e.g., Social Security officials, theft, violence against the person and various delinquent acts; even bad language and 'naughtiness in school' have been seen to relate to this heading.

It is an attractive proposition that the expectations of the professionals interviewed are for higher levels of behaviour than they encounter but one wonders whether they appreciate the extent to which cultural difference may account for the perceived lower behaviour standards. Some witnesses spoke as if absolute standards should prevail. A number of points from the literature come to mind in this connection.

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\* The quarrel among parents about the school fête was perhaps an example of the more 'civilised' disagreement.

There is the idea that children from certain backgrounds may well be seen as incapable of sustaining behaviour beyond a certain level. The earlier work on teacher expectations related more to school work performance rather than to behaviour<sup>11</sup> but Becker's concept of the 'ideal pupil' might usefully be considered here<sup>12</sup> and it is necessary to remember the three areas in which Becker found his teacher-subjects to have problems when their clients (pupils) differed from the images they held of the 'ideal pupil'. There was the problem of teaching itself - i.e., the quantity and quality of work pupils could be persuaded to do; there was the problem of discipline; and there was the problem of the moral acceptability of the pupils. Whilst it might be possible, through a process of teacher-pupil negotiation,<sup>13</sup> to arrive at work and behaviour levels acceptable to both in respect of the first two problem areas Becker found this to be virtually impossible in the case of the moral acceptability of the pupils to the teacher. The Chapter 4 statement of Mrs 'J' (Note 150) seems to suggest that, rather than any form of teacher-pupil negotiation, there is a general slippage in standards among teachers who stay long at Meadowland Primary School.\*

Mrs 'J': I think that's why you can stay too long in a school like this. After a year I appreciate that there are people here who have been here too long because they accept...lower standards. Lower standards of teaching because the children aren't capable of too much. I think it also creeps into your own social, into your own personal life.

It would seem highly probable that one or more of the characteristics listed at A.III will be in evidence when professionals such as those interviewed perceive children as deprived. However, the researcher

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\* A reader of this thesis wonders whether this might be rather mature acceptance and adjustment rather than slippage or, and this is hard to refute, perhaps the teacher concerned was somewhat over-sensitive.

would want to draw attention to the difficulties inherent in identifying the characteristics 'anti-social' and 'immoral' and feels the very search for the meaning of such terms to the interview subjects has explored cultural differences in perception which lie at the heart of the problem discussed in this thesis.

A. IV Children seen as having low aspirations, being inept, poorly organised and lacking in social skills

Discussion in the Chapter 4 section dealing with these characteristics uses material of the kind introduced into debates about educability but seldom looked at in this kind of detail. The main providers of this material are Mr 'Q', Mr 'X', Miss 'S', Mrs 'H', Mrs 'Q', Mrs 'J', Mr 'Mo', Mr 'H' and Mrs 'T'.

The first sub-heading in the section is 'Low aspirations' and the City's educational psychologist gives an authoritative basis to what other witnesses have to say about the seemingly well-justified lack of ambition among both the children of Meadowland School and their parents.

Under the next sub-heading, 'Ability', the educational psychologist again sets the scene by pronouncing the pupils of Meadowland School to be 'at the bottom of the league' (Chapter 4, Note 161) and the testimonies of others show the perceived ineptitude of these children in the classroom and beyond.

The details of poor educational attainment are discussed both in this section of Chapter 4 and in Chapter 3, when the Meadowland application for E.P.A. status is receiving attention. As noted at the end of the section in Chapter 4, it is encouraging to find, amidst so much evidence pointing to the lack of prospects for these children, a few suggestions about unrealised potential. Again it is Mr 'H' and Mrs 'T' who offer intelligent pointers in this direction.

The final part of this section in Chapter 4 is headed 'Social organisation and social skills' and a good deal of what has been submitted in previous sections about social disorganisation is here summarised. Most witnesses seem to have been in little doubt about the unsatisfactory nature of the home lives of the children seen as deprived and to have deplored a general lack of social training.

The difficulties of attempting to measure in any precise way the extent of perceived social disorganisation are pointed out yet the overwhelming impression is that witnesses feel this to be a crucial factor contributing to the children's poor educational attainment.

On the basis of the testimonies given, the probability is that all the characteristics listed at A.IV will apply to children seen as 'deprived' by such witnesses as these.

A. V Children seen as lacking a worthwhile culture and having little appreciation of the good things of life

If it was difficult to codify evidence on social disorganisation, this topic area has provided even more problems. Clearly most witnesses felt strongly about a perceived cultural deprivation in the neighbourhood and in the detail of many of the testimonies offered so far there is evidence of this, but subjects have not found it easy to express their views under this very general heading.

Those contributing directly to this section were Mr 'I', Mrs 'X', Mr 'Mo', Miss 'S', Mrs 'Q' and Mrs 'J' but views of other witnesses are included in summarising statements.

The author's hesitation over the interpretation of 'worthwhile culture' and 'the good things of life' early in this section of Chapter 4 perhaps reveals an uncertainty about the best way to pull together the considerable verbal evidence concerning the Meadowland Estate way of life contributed by teachers and other interview subjects. In fact, in

spite of all that has been gathered in from witnesses about the children at school and at home, real doubt exists about the circumstances of life of the estate-dwellers and one has to remember again that it is the conceptions of witnesses that are being collated rather than factual descriptions of physical circumstances experienced by children seen as 'deprived'. Even so, the teachers' lack of participation in and real knowledge about neighbourhood affairs is clear when one reflects upon the evidence presented. Clues that 'cultural deprivation' may not be as severe as witnesses have proposed come to be sought and one considers again the suspicion of Mrs 'X', the assistant planner, that there is very much more substance to aspirations for community recognition by Meadowland Estate-dwellers than is generally realised (Chapter 4, Note 189). If this were an exercise in gathering factual data about the neighbourhood one would want to know the fate of the local free press - mentioned by Mrs 'X' - and how the community hall built by local residents was being used; then what of the passing reference to a school fête being organised by parents (Chapter 4, Note 190)?

There would seem to be so much more to be learned before a full picture could be presented but it is necessary to keep to the pattern of enquiry which has been adopted and to remember that it is the situated meaning of deprivation as perceived by interview subjects that is sought.

If the assumed effect of cultural background could somehow be divorced from school attitudes and attainment then some of the teacher-witnesses would clearly take a kinder view of their pupils' home circumstances.\* There were a number of references as to how Meadowland people tended to

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\* A suggested variation is that teachers tend to be over-anxious about home cultural conditions because they fear they may have an adverse effect upon school attainment: if this anxiety did not exist they could take a more relaxed view, to the benefit of their teaching.

stay in the neighbourhood and some went as far as identifying a local loyalty. Mrs 'Q' referred to its being 'the cultural thing to stay at home' (Chapter 4, Note 198) and acknowledged:

It must be an atmosphere which they enjoy...I suppose it's quite friendly in a funny sort of way.

Later, it will be recalled, she compared the neighbourhood with her childhood home as follows (Chapter 4, Note 199):

I lived in Croydon as a child and I feel it is more tranquil down here...somehow the pace is slower.

Others too had acknowledged the slower pace of life on the Meadowland Estate but had not seen it as a desirable feature. Mrs 'Q' saw it as 'quite a close-knit community' but didn't think they were 'close in the true sense of close and affectionately close' yet found that they would 'look after each others' families' (Chapter 4, Note 201). Mr 'Uy', the former Head of the Edward Corkon Secondary Modern School, had earlier stressed that a cultural feature of the City was that it was a great place for the family and that this applied equally well to the outlying housing estates (Chapter 4, Note 200). A very different view was expressed by Mrs 'J' when she spoke of a general lack of loyalty to each other being a feature of the Meadowland neighbourhood and could not understand why young people growing up stayed around and why the few who did go away to work always returned home (Chapter 4, Note 202). It will be recalled that some witnesses were perplexed when signs of a family ethos appeared and tended to dismiss it as a strange form of sentimentality.

Whilst acknowledging that 'lack of a worthwhile culture' has a certain legitimacy in the context of this research, some readers of the thesis have expressed surprise that 'little appreciation of the good things of life' should appear as a possible characteristic of deprivation. The researcher sees a close link between the two phrases but feels that

discussion of 'a worthwhile culture' can properly include consideration of a range of material which relates to ways of life: in fact, to elaborate upon a point made above, a great deal of the material collected during this research project has a cultural dimension, using the word culture in the anthropological sense. A greater specificity is gained through enquiring into what witnesses perceive as being 'the good things of life'. Clearly this will depend upon the cultural values to which a particular witness subscribes but this sub-heading has allowed a degree of measurement of what these professional people see as being 'good things of life' and a few examples appear in the last part of this section in Chapter 4:

Good things

Books to read...

Sunday walks...

Selective viewing of television...

Holidays '...somewhere jolly nice, like Spain...'

The City swimming pool

Bad things

'...newspapers, the sort with nude ladies in them.'

[Ch 4, Note 203]

Children 'just put into the car and taken to the nearest bit of stony sand'.

[Ch 4, Note 204]

'...they just switch the television on and leave it until it goes off'.

[Ch 4, Note 204]

Days out which offer nothing attractive for the children.

[Ch 4, Note 206]

'...mucking around in the pond'.

[Ch 4, Note 205]

And throughout the material used for all sections of Chapter 4 examples abound of what are perceived as 'good things' by the subjects interviewed, though found by them to be little in evidence on the Meadowland Estate, and what are perceived to be 'bad things', thought to be in plentiful supply in this neighbourhood. It is hardly surprising that there should be an implicit agreement among these professional people that certain



things, such as home cooking of fresh food and 'wholesome' leisure pursuits such as walking and cycling, exemplify the good life whereas other things, such as convenience foods and bingo, seem to illustrate just what is wrong with society. Were it the intention to discover why the witnesses interviewed offered the views which they did about the characteristics of a deprived child then clearly a closer examination of what they consider to be essential 'cultural capital',<sup>14</sup> could be most revealing, but, apart from some thoughts on the professional socialisation of teachers later in this chapter, it is not proposed to enquire in this direction.

Thus it would seem inevitable that for a child to be labelled 'deprived' in the sense that this word has been interpreted in the testimonies discussed in Chapter 4 he or she will be seen by the labeller as having some form of cultural deprivation, making it unlikely that the child will be attracted to the life style and interests of the professional person using the label.

#### Overall finding on the factors listed under A

The evidence presented suggests a close correlation between the awarding of the label 'deprived child' and the perceived characteristics listed at A.I to A.V.

#### A consideration of the statements set down under B

In the light of what is presented above it is now intended to examine the statements set down at the beginning of Chapter 4 by B.I, B.II, B.III and B.IV.

#### B. I Such labelling arises out of cultural difference

From what has already been written, particularly in the summary under A.V above, there can be little doubt that where such labelling has been identified in this research project it has related to cultural

differences between the labeller and the labelled.

Recalling the deficit system model discussed in Chapter 1, it was postulated (Chapter 1, Note 89)

This model conceives of minority group members as being somehow inadequately socialised into the core cultural values and competences engendered by the dominant... culture.

and it is clear that most of the witnesses interviewed in this research project have found the children they see as deprived 'inadequately socialised...' in the way suggested by Watson. To move the discussion on from here it is necessary to consider 'core cultural values and competences engendered by the dominant culture' and to search for indications in the collected data that witnesses are themselves clear about the core cultural values and competences seen to be lacking in children labelled 'deprived'.\* It has already been shown that the 'better' standards to which teacher-subjects give their support are seldom spelt out and this makes comparison with standards existing on the Meadowland Estate difficult. Mrs 'Q' voiced an opinion which would clearly be supported by most of the witnesses when she said:

If you are middle class...and you send your children to this school it is completely wrong for these children, they can't cope with it. And you're doing your child no good if you send it here if you're a "better" person...<sup>15</sup>

The need for higher values, better standards and desirable competences is constantly hinted at throughout the interview transcripts: this is not done by direct reference though, it is rather a case of showing what is not acceptable - particularly in the school context.

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\* It has been objected that the operative sense of 'deprived' is conceptually almost identical with 'inadequately socialised'. This helps discussion focus upon cultural difference and the argument developed by Keddle in Tinker, Tailor... is worth further attention and this is again taken up below.

Clearly there is dissatisfaction with the cultural and material circumstances of the Meadowland children and it is surprising that the only allusion to compensatory education in the collected evidence occurs when the school's application for E.P.A. status is being reported. As was written in Chapter 1 (see Note 90):

The conception of inadequate socialisation underlies most compensatory education programmes in that they are "generally oriented toward preventing the development of deficits within children by, for instance, developing preschool schemes which culturally...compensate for the alleged lack of acquisition of...skills within the family and local community'. Thus the "enrichment" programmes.

Apart from the Head's application, it is unlikely that Meadowland teachers had given consideration to the potential a compensatory programme might have in offsetting the deficits seen to exist in the pupils and in their homes.\* There remain serious doubts as to whether the teacher-subjects were sufficiently sure of the detail involved in the necessary 'core cultural values and competences' for them to be true adherents to the deficit system model.

From general discussion, it appeared that some Meadowland teachers found Keddie's idea of 'the myth of cultural deprivation'<sup>16</sup> interesting though they did not see cultural deprivation as a 'taken for granted assumption'. Even so, sufficient evidence exists in their testimonies to suggest that the following much-quoted paragraph

[cultural deprivation] becomes a euphemism for saying that working-class and ethnic groups have cultures which are at least dissonant with, if not inferior to, the "mainstream" culture of the society at large. Culturally deprived children, then, come from homes where mainstream values do

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\* There appeared to be a certain amount of cynicism amongst the teachers concerning the County's rejection of the first EPA application. News of the limited success of the second application came through after completion of field-work for this project and it was not possible to measure their reaction in any full sense.

not prevail and are therefore less "educable" than other children. The argument is that the school's function is to transmit the mainstream values of the society and the failure of these children to acquire these values lies in their lack of educability. Thus their failure in school is located in the home, in the pre-school environment, and not within the nature and social organisation of the school which "processes" the children into achievement rates.

articulates well the position of most Meadowland teachers. The concept of cultural deprivation would seem to be well institutionalised as far as the research area is concerned thus putting those children seen as 'deprived' 'at a disadvantage in terms of what is expected from them from the day they enter school'.<sup>16</sup>

The cultural pluralism model has some validity in the Meadowland situation in the sense that the residents clearly occupy a different cultural milieu from the teachers and other professionals concerned with the estate. Watson was quoted in Chapter 1 (see Note 83) as follows:

The simple cultural pluralism model involves the assertion that the notion of cultural deprivation of subordinate group children is an oversimplification. The proponents of this view insist that the experience of living in a subordinate group is a basic influence on, and in turn is influenced by, the "cultural milieu" of the group and may differ in many respects, both morally and cognitively, from the dominant, high-prestige culture of high-status groups.

After reflection upon their testimonies it seems likely that most of the witnesses interviewed would be able to accept this as a fair description of existing cultural differences. It was pointed out that Watson saw the basic assumptions of the simple cultural pluralism model as being related in some respects to the theoretical model underlying the deficit system concept - both stemming from Horton's order theories<sup>17</sup> - and Watson's definition helps the writer resolve his earlier doubts about the applicability of the deficit system model to the majority of his interview subjects. Even so, this definition is still seen as unduly limiting the

scope of the cultural pluralism model.

In Chapter 1 the author has shown the alternative competences model as an enlightened extension of cultural pluralism in its fullest sense. It is unlikely that many of the witnesses interviewed would detect much that was helpful in the concept of alternative competences as far as Meadowland children were concerned\* and extracts from Keddle are used to develop this idea.

Keddle asks<sup>16</sup> 'why is it that with the children before their eyes teachers and researchers have failed to see what kids from poor homes are capable of' and Demaine<sup>18</sup> comments that Keddle's critique is not directed at the concept of cultural deprivation but at teachers and teachers' culture.

Teachers are urged towards a reorientation in which they will come to regard the culture of working class and ethnic groups as no less valid than the "mainstream culture" that they as teachers are alleged to represent.

Using Keddle's words, he proposes that this might lead to

...a redirection of educational research away from attempting to formulate how to make children more like teachers. It would be more sensible to consider how to make teachers more bicultural, more like the children they teach, so that they can understand forms of English which they do not themselves use as native speakers.<sup>19</sup>

It has been well illustrated in this research project that there is frequently a dissonance between the child's culture and the teacher's culture but there has been little to suggest that teacher-subjects have sought to discover alternative competences present among Meadowland Estate dwellers which could well be taken notice of in classroom practice. In Chapter 1 the hope was expressed that an appreciation of

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\* But it has been usefully asked by a reader: Couldn't teachers be treated as if they could develop alternative competences? Something of this thinking is discernible in the section on 'Operational advice' below.

alternative competences will lead a teacher towards a fuller understanding of children previously seen as unsatisfactory in most aspects of school life. Bernstein's words<sup>20</sup> concluded this section:

...if the culture of the teacher is to become part of the consciousness of the child, then the culture of the child must first be in the consciousness of the teacher.

#### B. II Such labelling leads to low teacher expectations

In Chapter 1 it was recalled how recent reports by H.M.Is and others had drawn attention to the low expectations that teachers have of children from home backgrounds seen as deprived (Chapter 1, Note 22). Data collected in this research project confirm that Meadowland teachers and other involved professionals do not expect very much in the way of school attainment from the pupils of Meadowland Primary School.

It is difficult to deny that our school system is predicated upon success and failure and it would hardly be surprising, therefore, if the conceptions Meadowland teachers have been shown to hold of many of their charges have led to self-fulfilling prophecies. Too much should not be drawn from the debatable findings of Rosenthal and Jacobson<sup>21</sup> when considering the Meadowland School scene but their description of how the process of self-fulfilling prophecy starts with the teachers' perceptions of children on their first day at school has relevance in the context of the evidence collected. How true is it, one wonders, whether for better or for worse on this day children begin to acquire labels which they will carry through the school system, proclaiming to other teachers just what the nature of each child's future is to be - as prophesied by his or her first teacher.

Another source in the literature comes to mind in this respect, 36 Children: at the beginning of this book Kohl<sup>22</sup> describes how it was a natural reaction for him to make assumptions about the abilities

of his class. His work develops into an essay on overcoming the dangers of prejudice towards his pupils. The idea brings to mind the concept of teacher socialisation.

Looking at processes at work in the humanities department of a large comprehensive school, Keddie<sup>23</sup> asks (a) what knowledge teachers have of pupils and (b) what counts as knowledge to be made available and evaluated in the classroom? Against the normal pattern of teacher socialisation, Keddie contends that what are held to be knowledge and ability in schools have to be treated as problematic. She finds 'that type of child' characterisation gets in the way and this reminds of Kohl's warnings against prejudice towards pupils. Keddie found that teachers thought 'A' streamers to be more like themselves and, therefore, teaching them was relatively unproblematic - classroom activities could be more or less taken for granted and what counted as knowledge could be left implicit and, apparently, consensual. 'C' stream pupils, on the other hand, she found to disrupt teachers' expectations and violate their norms of appropriate social, moral and intellectual behaviour. She posited that behaviour seen as inappropriate or inadequate made more visible what is held to be appropriate pupil behaviour. Keddie's work certainly provoked questions about the norms which govern teachers' expectations about appropriate pupil behaviour. Her use of Becker's concept of the ideal pupil, referred to above,<sup>24</sup> is of interest in the context of where teachers' knowledge of their pupils comes from. It will be recalled how Meadowland teachers were found in this research project to have more ideas about inappropriate and inadequate behaviour than firm suggestions as to what was appropriate: \* there were, however,

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\* Overall, witnesses have found more to condemn than they have to praise in their consideration of the children they have seen as deprived. This statement would seem to stand regardless of one's views about Becker's 'ideal pupil image'.

comparisons made with performance/behaviour standards encountered in schools elsewhere in which Meadowland teachers had served. Very occasionally teachers used statements like 'we were taught at college to...', hinting at the mechanisms of early teacher socialisation. Little was said by witnesses though that was helpful in the identification of an ideal pupil image.

The professional socialisation of teachers has been judged by some to be a thorough process<sup>25</sup> though its subtleties, for example, the way in which newcomers to the profession receive ready-made images of different categories of pupil, are seldom recognised by those undergoing that process. When the writer entered the profession he saw little to question in the then almost universal practice of firmly categorising pupils in three or more streams and would have dismissed the following objection, succinctly expressed by Nash,<sup>26</sup> as being unworthy of attention in the well-ordered settings then encountered.

The fear is that the child whose achievements are poor will intuitively feel from this form of grouping that he is backward. And from this it may be that a self-fulfilling prophecy will begin to operate. Children who know they are thought poor at school will be poor at school.

Nash develops the point to talk about comparison within a class with a quotation from an N.F.E.R. report.<sup>27</sup>

The image a child has of himself appears to be based on his teacher's attitude, how well he can do his school work, and how he compares with his classmates in terms of his work standard, marks and even class position.

Whether or not a teacher has been socialised into believing that streaming by ability is a necessary part of school organisation may not be of crucial importance but it is firmly suggested that through training and experience teachers do come to operate within given parameters of knowledge, to define teaching in a certain way, to categorise both pupils



and situations and to adopt a readily identifiable line in their routine plans for ordering and coping with everyday life in school.

The evidence collected in this research project lends support to the conclusion that teachers tend to expect low achievement from pupils seen as deprived: it is conceivable that teacher socialisation is a significant factor in this low expectation.\*

B. III Such labelling leads to low achievement on the part of the children seen as deprived

Clearly there is considerable overlap between what is proposed above at B.II and the material of this B.III proposal but in the former the writer has concentrated upon aspects of teacher socialisation and the concept of the self-fulfilling prophecy while here it is intended to elaborate upon ideas which stem from the Nash quotations included in B.II.

The evidence provided in Chapters 3 and 4 can leave little doubt that actual attainment in Meadowland Primary School is low. It has to be asked whether this low school achievement relates to the labelling which clearly occurs and the low expectations of Meadowland teachers.

The N.F.B.R. report referred to above<sup>27</sup> finds that the image a child has of himself appears to be based on his teacher's attitude, how well he can do his school work, and how he compares with his classmates in terms of his work standard, marks and even class position. Nash<sup>28</sup> has usefully demonstrated how these factors applied to his considerable sample of primary and secondary school-children and some of the points he makes have become apparent, particularly during participant-observation periods, in the Meadowland study. These brief examples are offered from field notes.

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\* The author's thirteen years of association with teacher training, both initial and in-service, is a factor underlying the latter proposal.

(a) Self-image based upon teacher's attitude

A confident second-year junior girl had rushed into the next room where her Indoor Games Club teacher, Mrs 'H', had just taken the researcher to meet Mrs 'Q', the Cookery Club teacher. The girl told Mrs 'H' that one of the boys - with a name frequently associated with mischievous acts, low achievement and generally unsatisfactory behaviour ("he has the look of a deprived child") - was picking up jerboas by<sup>29</sup> their tails. Mrs 'H' said "Jennie, you can deal with him. Put them back in the cage" and the girl went off without a trace of uncertainty to do as she was bid by her teacher. Mrs 'H' explained to the researcher what a capable child<sup>30</sup> she was, although her home life also showed signs of deprivation.\* 31

(b) Self-image based upon how well a child can do his or her work and how he or she compares with classmates

Further volunteers in Miss 'S's' remedial group to read<sup>32</sup> aloud. Rather more competent than in the younger group, but still expressionless and showing scant appreciation of the meaning of the words. This was Dicky and he was nine, reading from 'The White Wolf...Dragon...Series'. He insisted that he never read anything at home and clearly thought it a daft question. Some of those around him said that they read at home though: one bright-seeming lad said that he went to the City Library and always had a library book at home. I looked carefully at this boy and wondered why he was in a remedial group. He was contemptuous of the suggestion that he might read comics.

Three of the four boys in this latest group read to me and then I asked the oldest, an eleven-year-old, and he responded "Cor, I aint much good at it". He had been the most talkative until this point. However, he had a go and stumbled along in a much lower pitch than any of the others..."I can read better than that" declared one of the younger boys. "No you aint, you don't read these" responded the senior lad...trying to reassert his physical superiority after a dismal attempt to read aloud. Clearly the boys knew how they compared with each other in reading ability but there is a suspicion that the kindly Miss 'S' helped them rationalise a lowly position in some cases,

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\* A reader has asked whether teacher ability to inspire confidence constitutes evidence that teachers actually instil diffidence. The author is of the opinion that teachers do possess this kind of power but are often unaware of its existence. They could probably do much to counter the diffidence observed during this school study.

e.g., this senior boy who really thought he was attempting to read more grown-up material than some younger boys who seemed better readers.\*

It is unlikely that teacher expectations could be other than low in the situation just described and, whatever his teachers' conceptions of deprivation may have been, it is not instantly clear how labelling could have played much part in the poor reading performance of this senior primary-school pupil. Keddie's classroom research<sup>25</sup> introduces another view worthy of consideration here. She postulates that 'C' children are not prepared to suspend judgment on what they see as irrelevant or inappropriate in the context of everyday meaning and to take the teacher's word that what is on offer in the classroom is worth having. Clearly most of the pupils in Miss 'S's' remedial group were not truly convinced about the worthwhileness of reading in everyday life: most accepted that they were poor readers but were prepared to 'have a go' in the sympathetic atmosphere which had been created - they wanted to please her but could not see much point in this great emphasis upon reading.

Such reflections lead towards the idea that there needs to be a drive to convince children in this position and, quite as importantly, their parents that the skills and knowledge available in school are worth acquiring. This is likely to be a difficult task if much of what is on offer is seen by 'deprived' sections of society as irrelevant and inappropriate. Somehow, it seems, there has to be a meeting of

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\* Dicky was making fair progress in Miss 'S's' remedial group but did not see the point of trying to compete with the 'bright-seeming City Library' lad shown on Miss 'S's' chart to be well ahead with his reading. The older, more backward, boy must have known that his reading ability was below that of the younger boys but he used the fact that his reading material was designed for older backward readers to defend his age status.

minds in which teachers attempt to understand why so much on offer in school is not received as relevant and appropriate by those categorised as deprived (clearly the very categorisation has something to do with this) and in which the latter become motivated to take full advantage of the professional expertise existing in the schools.

B. IV Such labelling leads to less than adequate educational provision for the children seen as deprived

It has been proposed above that in the process of labelling some of their pupils 'deprived' teachers lower their expectations of these children and, in consequence, lessen the effectiveness of their teaching. The author believes that his categorisation of pupils during classroom teaching impeded his performance as far as those pupils seen as deprived were concerned<sup>7</sup> and links have been suggested in this chapter between the undeniably low school achievement rates of Meadowland School children and the high proportion of pupils on its roll seen as deprived. If, as seems probable, the fact of such labelling in a school so placed can be equated with lessened teacher effectiveness then the adequacy of educational provision in that school must be reduced.

It is interesting to recall the details of Meadowland School's application for E.P.A. status (Chapter 3, pp. 142-46). This was a second application, it will be remembered, and clearly it was necessary for the Head Teacher to convince the County Education Authority this time about 'the kind of difficulty he and his staff were facing in trying to teach these children'. In Chapter 3 it was reported how Mr 'I'<sup>33</sup> thought his testing of 38 children at the top of the Junior Section illustrated particularly well such difficulties. The top scorer in a verbal reasoning test was shown to have an I.Q. of 105, the second child topped 100 and the third scored 98; the remaining 35 children scored between 97 and 77.

With this kind of data Mr 'I' could hardly fail to impress the Authority that attainment standards were low. It will be recalled that the remainder of the application dealt with the indices of deprivation listed by the County and the school was officially declared to be serving an 'area of social difficulty' with the immediate effect that an additional member of staff was assigned to replace the remedial teacher, Mrs 'T', recently lost to the school in economy cuts.

The Plowden Committee intended that schools serving socially and economically disadvantaged areas should be able, through 'positive discrimination', to provide more than adequate educational facilities for children identified as in need of extra help. Different local education authorities have identified E.P.As as a variety of ways - generally based upon the criteria laid down in the Plowden Report<sup>34</sup> - but it has frequently proved difficult to identify in any precise way a geographical area which fits the description 'deprived area' in any absolute sense. After having the Meadowland Estate described by officials as the most deprived area of the City and hearing the evidence of witnesses it was surprising to learn from the 1971 Census returns that as many as 7.7 per cent of the working population of the Estate were placed in S.E.G. 1 and that 26.9 per cent were skilled manual workers. True, the unemployment figure of 9 per cent, which must have seemed extremely high in 1971, and the large number of children entitled to free school meals helped confirm the 'deprived area' image of the Estate but it caused one to ponder Berthoud's statement<sup>35</sup> (however confusing it may have been found by Halsey<sup>36</sup>):

...it has since been found that the concentration of "deprived" children in "deprived" areas is not sufficient to justify an area-based approach - most deprived children live outside such areas and most children in such areas are not deprived.

The above may give some indication as to why the County Education Authority has failed to give full E.P.A. status to the Meadowland School but the evidence collected in this research project indicates that teachers and other professionals concerned with the children of the Estate have used the 'deprived' label in a consistent and significant way causing questions to be raised about the adequacy of educational provision.\*

Proposals B.I, B.II and B.III would seem to have considerable substance and proposal B.IV may be seen as an inevitable consequence, given the circumstances described. It has to be asked whether improved educational provision in the sense of the allocation of more and better resources would significantly change the situation while the professionals concerned perceive the community in the way that they have been shown to do. Even positive discrimination of the kind envisaged by Plowden seems unlikely to improve matters in the way the Committee forecasted.

#### Operational advice

The economic scene has changed for the worse since the field work for this enquiry was carried out and the prospects for these young people when they leave school must be seen as grim. It is not proposed to discuss the possible social consequences of the present recession nor has the writer attempted to equate the conceptions of the witnesses with wider ideological beliefs. Sharp and Green<sup>37</sup> have concerned themselves with larger societal structures and they insist:

The sociologist should...go beyond the phenomenological preoccupation with human meanings and the action with which they are logically connected. To stop there would be unnecessarily limiting and not enable the analyst to evolve any movement beyond the purely descriptive or illustrative level of enquiry.

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\* A reader points out that the Berthoud argument suggests that an area is not the most suitable administration framework for reinforcing social priorities: this study could well illustrate the point.

The intention here is rather to offer ideas which may be taken as operational advice to be acted upon, hopefully, by teachers who find themselves in a Meadowland Estate situation and by those who are in a position to institute the kind of measures proposed. It is recognised that the extent to which action is likely to be taken must rest to a considerable extent upon ideological conviction but, although there has been some evidence of political/ideological leanings of subjects contributing to this project, it is not proposed to attempt an analysis of such leanings.\*

Clearly there is an urgent need for teachers working in situations such as the Meadowland Estate to make efforts to understand, and, hopefully, befriend the people of the school's catchment area. In the process of doing this it seems highly probable that the alternative competences referred to above will come to be discovered. The tendency for teachers working in areas perceived as deprived to live elsewhere is very understandable and it came as no surprise that all Meadowland teachers lived well away from the Estate. Their lack of real knowledge of the Estate's affairs, however, was surprising and undoubtedly there was substance in the assistant planner's evidence when she spoke of local activities leading toward self-identity in the community. Wherever they may live teachers of 'deprived children' need factual knowledge of the community they are serving - general impressions, often little more than hunches, of the kind so plentifully revealed in this enquiry are no substitute.

Bernstein has stressed<sup>38</sup> that teachers working in conditions of the kind described for Meadowland School should not perceive a deficit

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\* Clearly teachers working within a Meadowland Estate situation should examine their own political/ideological positions, and this would form an important item on the agenda for the professional seminars advocated in the last paragraph of this thesis.

situation, rather they should get on with positive teaching. This underlines the need for all concerned to devote their professional skill to teaching all children to the highest possible standards, having particular regard to the local relevance of the curriculum and pedagogy in use.<sup>39</sup> It does seem important that teachers serving under such conditions should have the opportunity to consider aspects of curriculum,\* pedagogy and school organisation with colleagues serving in similar circumstances elsewhere. Bettelheim<sup>40</sup> recounts how a series of meetings with American teachers from schools serving 'difficult neighbourhoods' helped iron out some of their classroom problems. Short courses of this nature do occur, though not frequently enough, in this country.<sup>41</sup> Effective in-service training which relates to both pedagogy and curriculum development is clearly of the greatest importance if real impact is to be made upon the problem of under-achievement of pupils seen as deprived. This requirement applies to a greater or lesser degree to every local education authority in the country: a few authorities, mainly in the conurbations, have gone some way towards providing the kind of in-service training provision envisaged<sup>41</sup> but in others it is non-existent.

Sufficient has been said to show that effective teaching is seen

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\* To the objection that a deficit position and positive teaching are not incompatible it has to be responded that the rational-deductive curriculum model of Wheeler and Kerr is less likely to be effective in the Meadowland situation than is the community-based curriculum model of Skilbeck. Little account has been taken in this study of the curriculum in use at Meadowland School but it is likely that the compilation of a locality profile, Skilbeck's first requirement when designing a curriculum, would be of considerable value in any move towards curriculum reform at that school. It is unlikely that such an exercise would be effective if the curriculum reformers held to a deficit view. The rational-deductive curriculum model fits better this position and it is unlikely that useful curriculum development should occur in Meadowland School using this model.



as the first line of attack upon negative ideas, labels and actions associated in schools with the concept of deprivation. Mastery of the basic skills can be seen as an antidote to notions of deprivation; as children are helped to achieve so the point of derogatory labelling fades. (Above it has been suggested that failure to master basic skills may itself be a factor in such labelling but there can be little doubt that impetus for such failure is contained in other factors.) It is submitted, therefore, that a teacher needs to be more than a skilled classroom operative if the concept of deprivation is to fade from his or her everyday reality of school.

Earlier in this chapter notice was taken of the idea that a teacher acquires the use of labels associated with deprivation in the course of professional socialisation and it has to be asked how permanent this process may have been. Berger and Luckman have pointed out:

the way in which reality is perceived in social situations is an artifact: a construction of all the participants of a social situation which, however permanent it may appear to be, may be redefined and therefore changed.<sup>42</sup>

The phenomenological approach of these authors allows that there is nothing absolute about socialisation processes and it does seem worth enquiring into the mechanisms of teacher socialisation which would appear to cause the easy assimilation by young teachers of concepts such as 'the deprived child'. This might best be achieved by encouraging a greater degree of reflexive thought among those who teach. During initial training students should be taught to ponder the dangers of operating strictly within the limits of the 'teacher context'<sup>43</sup> and to resist the all-too-available stereotypes of the children they are to teach. Serving teachers should be given greater opportunity to attend professional seminars, possibly arranged by colleges or teachers' centres,

at which they are able to leave the workaday teacher context for an hour or so and, in the more rarified atmosphere of the 'educationist context',<sup>44</sup> examine the full implication of topics such as deprivation. A thorough examination of each others' beliefs, biases and prejudices could occur and this might not be a comfortable experience, but such a soul-baring would help some teachers serving in areas seen as deprived towards a better understanding of cultural pluralism and, probably, greater professional fulfilment.

## CHAPTER 5

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  - 6 Proportions of retarded, disturbed and handicapped pupils
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HEADINGS USED IN THE ANALYSIS OF  
TRANSCRIPTS AND INTERVIEW NOTES

Accidents  
Administrators  
Affection  
Age difference/consciousness  
Amenities  
Animals (pets and others)  
Appearance/dress  
Aspirations  
Assemblies  
Attainment at school/testing  
Attendance/children kept at home  
Attitudes/psychological problems  
'Aunties'  
Awkward children  
Babyness  
Backwardness  
Bicycles  
Bingo  
Books  
Boys and girls  
Bristol Social Adjustment Guide  
Bullying  
Camping/outdoor activities  
Cars  
Catchment areas  
Change  
Charitable aid/non-official help  
Child guidance  
Children (1), (2) and (3)  
Cleanliness  
Clothing  
Communication  
Community

Concepts  
 Confidentiality  
 Co-operation  
 County Education Office  
 Culture/cultural deprivation  
 Curriculum  
 Death  
 Deficit/difference stances  
 Dental health  
 Deprivation - appearance - definitions  
 Divisional Education Office  
 Drink  
 Education authority  
 Education welfare  
 Emotion - emotional deprivation  
 Employment  
 Entry to school (infants)  
 E.P.A. status  
 E.S.N. provision  
 Ethics/morals  
 False claims  
 Family  
 Fantasy  
 Father's influence  
 Fear  
 Firms  
 Food/meals  
 Forgetfulness/casualness  
 Foster parents  
 Free school meals  
 Furniture and fittings  
 Games  
 Grandmas  
 Gypsies (1) and (2)  
 Handicapped children  
 Happiness/misery/humour/distress  
 Health

Hobbies  
 Home/school relationships, P.T.As  
 Holidays/trips  
 Homework  
 Household goods  
 Housing  
 Imagination  
 Immigration/emigration  
 Injury  
 Intelligence  
 Isolation - cut-off community - individuals  
 Labelling  
 Language - linguistic or speech deprivation  
 Large families  
 The law  
 Laziness  
 Library  
 Local government officials  
 Market  
 Marriage/inter-marriage  
 Maternal deprivation  
 Medical attention  
 Misapplication of income  
 Mental illness/psychiatric disorders  
 Methodology (research)  
 Minding your own business  
 Money  
 Moral standards (see too 'Ethics')  
 Naughtiness/rudeness/cheekiness  
 'Nerves'  
 Normality  
 One-parent families (see too 'single-parent families')  
 Parental interest/standards/characteristics  
 Physical/material deprivation  
 Place names  
 Play and play areas  
 Pocket money



Political activity/opinion  
 Poverty/deprivation  
 Pregnancy and young children  
 Prison  
 Problem families (1) and (2)  
 Public houses  
 Pupil authority  
 Quiet, shy, withdrawn, silly children  
 Reliability of evidence  
 Religion  
 Remedial teaching  
 Rent  
 Responsibility  
 Road names  
 Rubbish tip  
 Schools - comparisons between  
 Schools - list of  
 School clubs/social activities  
 School details (Meadowland Primary School)  
 Schools Psychological Service  
 School staff details (Meadowland)  
     (1) teaching staff  
     (2) clerical and domestic staff  
 Secondary school selection  
 Security  
 Sensory deprivation  
 Servicemen  
 Sex education  
 Sickness  
 Single-parent families (see 'one-parent families')  
 Sleep  
 Smoking  
 Social activities  
 Social class  
 Social security  
 Social welfare

Social workers (statutory)  
Social workers/organisers/helpers (voluntary)  
Spending  
Standards  
Stealing  
Swimming  
Teachers' remarks - discipline  
Teaching methods  
Television/record players etc.  
Thinking and reasoning  
Toys  
Transport  
Truthfulness  
Unemployment  
Underhandedness/slyness  
Unsettled homes  
Vandalism  
Violence  
Weather  
Working mothers  
Worry

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TRANSCRIPTS AND FIELD NOTES RELATING TO

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY THESIS

CONCEPTIONS OF DEPRIVATION: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

Submitted July, 1983

Open University

Student Number

This file contains TRANSCRIPTS of tape-recorded interviews and selections from FIELD NOTES about participant observation periods during which a tape-recorder was used.

In order to preserve anonymity the names of people and places are in code.

The tape-recorder was used in field work during the period 1 April 1976 to 20 July 1976 and the reference numbers 22 to 30 have been extracted from the series of notes which covers all field work carried out in this project.

#### C O N T E N T S

<u>Reference</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>
22	1 Apr 76	Notes on day of participant-observation and interviewing at Meadowland County Primary School. Teaching staff involved Mr Mo, Miss S and Miss K.
24	7 May 76	Interview with Mrs H
25	7 May 76	Interview with Mr H
26	21 May 76	Interviews and participant observation A. Indoor Games Club - Mrs H Cookery Club - Mrs Q B. Interview with Mrs J C. Interview with Mrs Q
28	20 Jul 76	Interview with Mrs J
29	20 Jul 76	Interview with Mrs T
30	20 Jul 76	Interview with Mrs Q

Note: Where Research Note References are used in the main body of the thesis it may be found that page numbers do not tie in with the coded version here presented. This is because the uncoded version was used during analysis and that was typed on a different machine with closer spacing.

1 April 1976

A day of participant-observation and interviewing at  
Meadowland County Primary School

9.40 a.m. in the classroom of Miss S, Deputy Head.

The children of Class 5 have just arrived from hymn practice in the Hall: they are drawing their reading materials and settling down in small groups at the tables to read noisily in monotonous or to write according to instructions on cards prepared by Miss S to test comprehension.

Class 5 is a first year group from which 12 boys and 10 girls are withdrawn for remedial work with Miss S, sometimes in two sections and sometimes, as now, the whole 22 children, mainly seven-year-olds.

At teacher's desk:

Self: This is Joseph, is it? (Glancing at his book cover)

Miss S: This is Joseph.

Self: Have you any brothers or sisters, Joseph?

Joseph: No.

Self: You're the only one, are you?

Joseph: Yes.

Unknown girl: I've got a brother at home - he's only 4.

Self: Can you read yet?

Unknown girl (uncertainly): Yeah.

Miss S: Carmen, you've got a nice lot of brothers and sisters, haven't you?

Carmen: Yep.

Self: How many brothers and sisters have you got then, Carmen?

Carmen: Five, I've got three sisters..

Self: Three girls?

Carmen: No, two girls...(some muddle)...One's grown up and she's got a little girl. Then there's Mum and Dad.

Self: So you're an auntie?

Carmen: Yes.

Self: How old's your niece?

Carmen: She's a big girl...she's at this school.

We found that the young sisters were Doreen and Susan. Clearly it is unrealistic to try and write down every part of each conversation because I seem to have put in so many supplementary questions to elicit extra information. A vague aim had been suggested by a remark about family size by Miss S and, as both she and Mr Mo had suggested this to be a key feature as far as deprived children were concerned, I kept it in mind when talking to the children during the early part of the day: later on, when talking to older children,



this factor appeared when they were talking about their homes and activities but I did not ask about family size so pointedly. So, to continue to report on my conversations with Class 5 children without attempting to give the kind of detail with which I started.

Susan, Carmen told me, was fifteen and she went to the Edward Gorton (S.M.) School. Her brothers were a little older and in other classes of Meadowland. Doreen was nine. Miss S interjected that big brother was Samuel and '...they've got a baby called Baby Sam..' So Carmen proved to be 'auntie' yet again. I understand big brother Samuel was eighteen.

When I was talking to individuals in this way other children would wander up to me reading in the characteristic flat and loud way of this remedial group. Occasionally I let them record short pieces.

Carmen's other brother was Peter and he was nine - presumably a twin to Doreen.

Samantha was the next child I approached. She insisted on reading to me in a particularly high-pitched, expressionless voice and making mistakes every few words. She told me that she had 'at least two' brothers and sisters - 'Kathie's seven, Dora's eight' she declared. Dora was her close friend and she played with her a lot. Samantha then revealed that Dora was her step-sister, like Kathie. Gordon was nine, nearly ten; she was not clear whether he was her brother and he did not go to Meadowland School.

I moved to Martin and Alec, the latter was the first to ask why I had 'that thing' (the tape-recorder) with me. I told him it was just to remind me what I was saying and to help me to build up a story. This seemed to satisfy them.

Alec volunteered that he had two brothers, aged eighteen and nine. The 18-year-old was not at work and not at school, he 'just mucked around'.

Martin was much less forthcoming about his large family (12 children in all) but he murmured about some grown-up sisters: after a little while he declared he had seven brothers. I found it hard to follow his words about how they managed to live in one council house because he kept his head well down and continued to write while I was talking with him - and a little girl was at my elbow trying to attract my attention. In more suitable circumstances I believe he would have made more clear some most unusual sleeping arrangements. Martin was non-committal as to whether he liked reading, writing or even playing, but he gave me a knowing look when I asked him if he liked fighting (I learnt later that this quiet withdrawn boy was quite violent outside the classroom).

I turned my attention to the little girl at my elbow and asked her about the singing which I had heard when coming into the school. It was clear she enjoyed the singing as she did everything else about school, yet she was a pathetic white-faced figure from a most 'unsatisfactory home'. I will identify her later but the snag is that details of individual children came

to light in Miss S's record book later in the morning: I was not scrupulous enough in asking names when I approached children and have not been able to tie up all the interesting identities. However, it is clear that a great deal of potent material was there for the taking and I can dip as I wish now that I have gained an appreciation of the field.

Then I talked to Joseph but he was not any more forthcoming than he had been before about home circumstances: he seemed to have a fair knowledge about television's fantasy figures of a violent disposition though. Miss S told me that he had a young brother who had only arrived a few days ago, he was called Matthew.

I mentioned to Miss S that I had found Martin and Alec rather shy. She confirmed that little was heard from them in the classroom and this recording testifies that there were few quiet ones among the 22 children of this remedial group.

Another child asked about my tape-recorder and I gave him a chance to try it out briefly.

Carmen came back to me and further confused me about her family, telling me of five brothers, three girls, and a forgotten baby - and Mum and Dad - then Pogo, the dog. 'Derek's the baby - one year's old - Adrian's seventeen... John is fifteen...we live in a little house not far from school.' (It later became clear that every child seemed to live very close to the school - with very few exceptions)

Then I heard from a girl who lives in New Common Barracks and who comes to school in a mini-bus. Her father was in the Royal Greenjackets. She remembered being in Dover and in Germany (where when it snows it's about 'that deep' - indicating some five inches with her hands)...and for our holidays we go up to London'. She left Germany when she was six - i.e. about eighteen months ago, she told me in an assured way (which I have noticed in other children from service families).

Carmen appeared again to tell me about Baby Sam '..he walks and he's only two, and he bites'. The girl from New Common Barracks volunteered that she only had one sister, who kicks her. Then other children came around me to press information about brothers and sisters - all very friendly but I'm afraid I did not organize the information very well on the tape recorder.

It was clear that five or six brothers or sisters was quite normal within the group. Dogs and other pets were frequently spoken of as if they were members of the family: e.g. 'Then there's Pal...he guards the house but he's going blind...' I asked if he was very old and the response was:-

'Well he's two...he goes into the garden when he wants to.' Was it a little garden I asked.

'No, it's quite big...he doesn't sleep in the kitchen he sleeps in the living room. But sometimes he comes to see me in ~~me~~ bed...he likes that.'

Then we seemed to switch back to house security.

'Sometimes my dad comes down and gets his gun.'

The girl said that she had not seen her father's gun but he told her he had one.

'I've seen his sword: it's a very big one.'

Then Carmen pressed upon me the birthday dates of some members of her family. Tessa, who was eleven, was born on June 16th... she was now at Edward Gorton (S.M.) School and she had to catch two buses to get there.

The conversation got on to swimming and I learnt that the older Meadowland children go to Queensgate Swimming Pool. Few of those around me were able to swim; water experience usually amounted to little more than paddling or 'mucking around in the pond'. Later conversations suggested that holiday making was fairly unusual among the children of Meadowland.

At this point I came to talk to a small group about the relative difficulty of their reading books: they were not at all sure on this and in some cases seemed to confuse the more interesting stories which had good illustrations with 'easy work'. They all seem to shout out their reading attempts in the same flat monotone and to be little aware of their mistakes - even though they must have known when they were guessing. I really must learn more about this remedial stage in the teaching of reading. I was assured by my young friends that Gay Way 6th Blue Book was easier than the 4th Blue Book.

We then had another brief discussion concerning my tape recorder and the kinds of story it would be able to tell me about them. They treated my question as to whether the instrument would record the splendid blue jumper one of them was wearing with the contempt it deserved. Later I talked briefly with Miss S again about their thinking and reasoning abilities and it is clear that teachers' opinions in this area will be important as I build up impressions of how they see their 'deprived' charges.

In fact the blue jumper that Katrina was wearing was seen as rather special by those around her; it was certainly a finished garment which stood out against the rather drab and 'tired' clothes most were wearing. She had bought it 'down town', she told me, at the 'jumper shop' but was unable to tell me which one, other than it was not Marks and Spencer's.

'I go to Marks and Spencer's' volunteered Alec, and I tried again to draw Martin into the conversation but he remained very shy, his nose close to his exercise book into which he was laboriously copying from card and reading book. I was told by a little girl that Martin's special friend was his big brother, also at Meadowland

'..and he's got a big sister wot goes to another school'.

I moved with my close guides to a display board on which were hung an assortment of keys. Some were quite old and the children told me they had got them from 'over the dump' at Salem. I intend to ask about this interesting-sounding place later on. They were obviously proud of their finds and the

way Miss S had displayed them.

Miss S drew my attention to Samantha, who I had spoken to earlier on. She had a confusing home life and more than once she had told Miss S 'My Mummy has gone off'. Details of this and other snippets appear later on. Miss S thought it was Samantha who had shown me her pinafore on a previous visit: clearly it had been cut out of material but she had said that it had been 'knitted by Gran'.

My attention was then drawn to Mavis. 'She is also an aunt' said Miss S and went on to tell of her difficult home life. Again, some more details later.

I made the point that they talked very easily and were keen to communicate, apart from Martin that is, he seemed so very shy. Miss S told me that the whole family were similar in this respect. She thought there were probably twelve in the family but there was some doubt about one who was born elsewhere.

Miss S said that 'we have quite a lot of accidents, probably because...(missed this)..., you know we're careless'. I mentioned how Phil Robinson and his colleagues had found the 'deprived' in their study to be desperately 'unlucky', how everything seemed to happen that could happen to these folk, who had so little anyway. She said that Alec should have told me about a brother in a wheel chair...it was not due to an accident, it was because of some childhood disease that went wrong...not a straight-forward polio case.

Peggy was pointed out as one of the quieter members of the group and I asked her if she had been taking part in that fine singing I had heard earlier. She said she had but then pointed to a boy next to her and told me he did not go into hymn practice. Miss S interjected that he went to a different church and this was why he did not go to assembly: perhaps he would like to talk about it.

Self: Which church do you go to?

Boy: I don't go to a church.

After a number of clues I suggested Jehovah's Witnesses and he said 'Yeah'. He located the meeting house in the City for me and agreed that he went on Sundays, with brothers and sisters, and also on Thursdays and then for study on Wednesdays.

Self: Do you read a lot?

Boy: Yeah, the Bible.

Self: You read the Bible?

Boy: Yeah.

I found it rather strange that a boy in a remedial reading group should be having all this extra reading practice with the good book without making significant progress with, e.g. Gay Way readers. I then heard something of this young Jehovah's Witness's family, mainly from the little girl beside him - Peggy, the quiet one. There was some confusion as to whether a brother was five or six and even the boy himself had to be reminded that he was seven. He was sure his sister was nine.

I then tried to get Mavis talking: she assured me that life was 'orlright' and that reading was 'easy'. She told me of one brother and one sister: she lived 'just down the road'.

At this point Mr Mo, the Acting Head, came into the room to greet me: he had arrived at school late after taking his wife to hospital.

Kenneth approached me and asked if I would talk to him. He told me that he was getting on alright but was doing some hard reading. He asked me my name and then if I had any children of my own who went to school. He sought my advice about some phonetic exercises of the kind used in the television programme 'On the Move' - he had not heard of it but some children did watch the programme regularly, often with their parents. Kenneth was an only child. He didn't live far from school and usually walked but sometimes came by car, his mother's. His father went to work but his mother did not. Kenneth is a slim, energetic, bespectacled boy with poise and endless curiosity, very different from his classmates in this remedial group. His father works on coaches and buses as a driver. It was not clear whether he was employed by the local corporation or did long-distance work of some kind.

I was then told of the 'Six Million Dollar Man' by some bright-eyed young fellow who Miss S later told me had the most incredible ideas. He was a keen fan of 'Dr Who' and all the more frightening programmes on television. He admitted that one programme, 'the eye one', had kept him awake for many nights afterwards. He reckoned he went to bed 'about ten, or nine, or eight, or perhaps eleven'. He got up about seven o'clock most days but at six or eight on Saturdays. His dad had to get up before five sometimes. He wanted to be a soldier when he grew up he told me and said he liked fighting. He identified the quiet Martin as one who was always picking on him and was 'a naughty boy'. I asked if he meant that he (Martin) liked hurting people or that he just got excited: the reply was 'He is just naughty'. At this point two little girls came to us with some carefully shaped plastercine 'cakes' and this young lad promptly dug his finger into some of them and spoiled them. The girls just smiled tolerantly and did not seem to mind at all. 'It's nearly the end of the lesson' said one of them.

From time to time children stopped their reading or writing and did things like plastercine modelling, sewing, playing draughts, but they were careful to see that each piece of school work done was recorded by Miss S - who undoubtedly knows exactly what each child in the group is doing all the time. In this free atmosphere it is clear the children positively like their reading and writing, however weak they may be at those activities.

Then I asked the bespectacled lad about his glasses. He had broken them twice since he had been at school but said he could see quite well without them. I think I may have been confused between Kenneth and another boy and will have to wait until I have access to records to sort this one out.

A number of children had painted paper shapes of large Easter

eggs and were anxious to show them to me.

The bell rang for playtime and most left the room without formality.

One little girl stayed beside me and told me of something in a Frankenstein picture that had frightened her and made her unwilling to go to her bedroom for a long time.

Miss S told me as we left for the Staff Room that Joseph arrived at the school only able to say 'No' and make animal noises; now he was one of the most interesting children to talk to. He was an only child, he has a step-father who resents him. Joseph's vocabulary has grown enormously; at first he just used to touch people, hit or stroke. I commented how the other children tolerated him and Miss S said that it was largely the understanding children around him that had brought him out of his near-animal state.

#### AFTER BREAK

These are children from the third and fourth years - 3 boys from Year IV and 7 boys and 1 girl from Year III. The girl is accompanied by two other Year III girls who are not in need of remedial teaching.

One boy, who says he came from Shropshire, was at the centre of things with his latest finds from 'over the dump'. The main attraction was a bundle of old maps. Some of the maps were pre-World War II O.S., dating in some cases much earlier in the century.

These children were much more impressed than the previous group had been with the content of the stories they were reading and wanted to tell me about the more remarkable characters in them. The drawing of imaginative scenes based on story content was popular.

There seemed to be less reading aloud going on than in the younger group but when it did occur it was still done in a fairly high-pitched monotone as with the younger children.

I overheard a piece of dialogue in which it was related that someone had told these children that they were all lazy and they lived with animals. Cross-talk obscured the details.

An interesting ethical point arose when a child was telling me about a theft in one of the stories. 'He stole it because he wanted it' she said. I asked if this made it all right to steal and the reply was a thoughtful 'Yes, if he really wanted it badly'. This child said she had two brothers and one sister: the sister was 19 and the older brother was 16 and went to Edward Gorton Gorton (S.M.) School, then someone went to Frederick Blenheim School and Samuel went to Meadowland. As had happened before the numbers in the family did not tie up. Samuel was eight and my informant was nine. She only had to climb over her fence to get home.

I was caught a number of times as an April fool - at this point I was informed that my watch had stopped.

A lad with us at this time claimed he had five sisters and two brothers: two babies, twins, and someone who was fifteen: this conversation became muddled by another young fellow who joined in to claim eleven in his family, then he amended this to say there used to be eleven - three of them had got married. They used to live in a big house but since 'the others have moved we have lived in a small house'. He still slept in a room with two brothers, aged 12 and 15. They got rough sometimes he said and of one of them he complained:-

'He can't stop leaving me alone.' \*

Then there were three sisters and two cats, another cat got run over. 'We did have some fish but they died' he added. A neighbouring boy interjected that his dog got knocked over; it was still alive but 'a bit bent'.

\* ('They can't stop picking on me' was another complaint by the above boy about his fraternal room-mates.)

The boy with the 'bent' dog had an older sister of whom he also complained:-

'She keep picking on me...'

Then followed some interesting banter during which I managed to parry more April fool attempts: these kids seemed delighted to have an adult who was prepared to take part in this particular nonsense.

The range of ages in this group was noticeable and in one or two cases there were children of not much over nine closely associated with children of eleven destined for secondary school in September. The few of the latter category I encountered did not seem to have given much thought to their secondary school destination yet awhile.

One eleven-year-old told me of his brother Keith who was seventeen and did night duties from six to six: he makes 'plastic things for cars'. The boy did not know whether his brother worked in the City or elsewhere. His brother Sidney was a plumber, he was sixteen. His sister June was seventeen 'and she don't work at nothing, she's got a baby - and my Uncle Bill, he's her husband, he works at the fizzy drinks factory'. The boy told me that his sister did not now live at home and went on:-

'My brother Ian has just come out of hospital and he's fourteen and he had appendicitis...then my brother Charlie, he's twelve, is at Edward Gorton (S.M. School)...and Michelle don't go to school at all, only play school.'

Another April fool interlude.

Then followed a chat with two boys about getting up time. Three boys slept in one room - an eleven-year-old with brothers of fourteen and fifteen and the eleven-year-old's account of tempestuous relationships included:-

'If he beats me up then I beat him up...'

The account finished with '...my dog's got a broken leg': another

example of pets being seen as family.

Another sample of reading aloud was taken. To be expected, rather more competence was shown than in the younger group but reading was still expressionless and scant appreciation of the meaning of words was shown. This was Dicky and he was nine, reading from 'The White Wolf..Dragon..Series'. He insisted that he never read anything at home and clearly thought my question was daft. Some of those around him said that they read at home though; one bright-seeming lad said that he went to the City Library and always had a library book at home. I looked carefully at this boy and wondered why he was in a remedial group. He was contemptuous of the suggestion that he might read comics.

Three of the four boys in this latest group read to me and then I asked the oldest, the eleven-year-old, and he responded:-

'Cor, I aint much good at it.'

He had been the most talkative until this point. He had a go, however, and stumbled along in a much lower pitch than any of the others had used, perhaps hoping that his many mistakes would not be noticed, but using the same tempo that all Miss S's children seemed to use when reading aloud - it was almost as if a metronome controlled their reading speeds. One of the younger boys declared:-

'I can read better than that.'

The senior lad responded:-

'No you aint, you don't read (pronounced 'red') these.'

I was not sure what he was on about but it was clear he was trying to re-assert his senior position after a dismal attempt to read to me. Even so, I was surprised to find that the older boy did have a fair appreciation of the meaning of the piece he had read - the illustrations probably helped him though.

The nine-year-old who had claimed he could read better then gave quite a confident performance. During this last interaction a quiet boy at the table had been laboriously writing out the story he had previously read. When I asked him why he was doing this he replied that his work card told him either to tell the story he had read or draw a picture about it: he thought copying down the story from the book was a good way of telling it!

Then I spoke to the two non-remedial girls in the group. One of them told me that she wanted to go to Frederick Blenheim (the secondary technical school) - she assured me that a lot of Meadowland children went to that school, saying:-

'Nearly all of Mr T's class go to Frederick Blenheim School.'

She clearly had reservations about the secondary modern school, Edward Gorton, to which I had understood received almost all Meadowland children. She wanted to be a typist when she grew up and said:-

'Cos if you're a typist you get a lot of money my Mum says.'

Self: Have you ever tried to use a typewriter?

Girl: Yeah, my sister's...I wrote her address (which she gave to me)...

She then noticed that my microphone was made in Holland and



seemed quite knowledgeable about components for radios, etc., tended to be made in different countries. This was the first child to mention my tape-recorder in this group whereas some half a dozen children in the younger group were curious about it.

Then I spoke to a ten-year-old boy about birthday dates and times of moving to secondary school. He seemed to know about such things but his companions were indifferent.

Getting-up times, breakfast and getting to school then provided a topic for discussion. None were very early risers and most seemed to eat the usual cereals but I was surprised to hear that chocolate spread and current buns were also popular breakfast foods. Drinks varied widely - tea, milk, coffee, water, Tizer, Coco Cola, and one boy insisted he sometimes had beer but this involved a complicated story about his Mum and a pub which had since closed down. Every child I spoke to seemed to take school dinner and I already knew from the Head's statistics that a fair proportion of those in these remedial groups received the meals free.

Pocket money then came up. The most prosperous child of this group of four had 30 pence left from last week (and this was Wednesday) but the other three only had a few pence and most of their pocket money seemed to go on snacks, e.g., crisps and sweet things at school. A boy joined up from another group and proudly told us that he had 40p left from last week's £1 pocket money: he did not buy many sweets and things, he saved it up for his holidays. He was going away with his mum and dad but he was not sure where. The other boys did not go away and one of them poked a little fun at the privileged lad who was to have a holiday - he suggested that he might be going to China. Another of his classmates said:-

'If you go to Rome you want to take a spear - you might meet a lion.'

This alluded to a version of Androcles which appeared in one of their readers. Another of the 'deprived' ones said sadly:-

'I've never been nowhere: I just play around here...there is a play school...we're not allowed to come into the school grounds...there's been a policeman around just lately.'

Self: Why can't you go in?

Boy: There's been too much damage...windows all smashed...there was all blood over it...a policeman came up.

Another Boy: Yeah, he had a talk with us.

Then followed something about a bayonet and a rubber ball which I could not follow.

None of the boys saw the damage being done but were sure it had happened in the night. One of the boys went on:-

'We aint got no playing ground now...only Stonefield Park, it's got tadpoles in it...Cos we can't play down there no more cos they're building in it...always builders there...we're not allowed to go down there anyway.'

Another boy told me that he went to places like 'Butlins, Bognor, seaside, anywhere...not Rome...I've been to France'.

The following dialogue took place with one of this group:-

Boy: In the night I get my big pen-knife, the dagger bit and the blade bit;...I take Mum out I leave one open in case someone comes out at me...I'm not going to get stabbed.

Self: Do people sometimes stab each other around here?

Boy: No. They play around with knives and cut their hands a bit.

Self: What, the big boys? (There was giggling in the group)

Boy: I cut my hand once with my little one...didn't hurt...I just went (grimace)...

Self: What, just to see what it was like?

Boy: Yeah...worth it! (More giggles)

We got onto tent pegs and even big nails as potential weapons so I asked if any of the group had been camping: two of the boys said they had pitched tents in the fields nearby but it was clear that it took a very brave person to accept the dare and stay out overnight. They admitted they got very scared and one said:-

'...with all the hounds about...it makes you feel funny... and the mosquitoes.'

They asked if I had ever had stitches - they seemed to be fascinated with the idea of cuts in the flesh. A boy graphically described how his father had been badly cut when repairing a radiator and many stitches had been necessary. A number of other accounts of bloodflowed.

Then I moved my attention to Miss S's record book and tried to pull together some details about all these children. I read some names and details on to tape at the back of the room but have found the recordings far from easy to transcribe because of excessive background noise. However, in Part II of these notes (which must remain confidential) I have managed to build up a fair amount of information, both factual and teacher's opinion, about the children. After a short period of reading into the tape recorder I learned from Miss S that I would be able to keep the record book for study after the lesson so I abandoned my efforts at taping from it with the children present.

I talked with the two more capable young ladies in the group about their needlework activities; they were making embroidered bags and one informed me that her mother had taught her all about sewing. They were sitting at the back of the room assiduously at work and talking to each other in quite an adult way, seeming rather aloof from all the remedial reading that was going on. As Miss S passed she commented 'They hardly qualify, do they?' (meaning for my deprivation study).

I did at this point read into the tape recorder as follows:-

'Richard, whose reading age is 5.11 is reading Pirate Six series and takes a lot of interest in stories. His sister has just got married (again background noise swamped my recording)...Miss S quite happy with his progress but he seems to have become progressively dirty and poorly dressed. Has free dinners and his father is out of work. Time off in

November...clothing clearly from jumble sale...and decline in appearance noticeable from that time. Later entries suggest a standstill in reading attainment.'

Noise again swamped recording.

'Matthew rather a spineless person...'

'Norman, reading age 6.5 - first seen by Miss S three years ago - had encountered two of his sisters in remedial work before this - lives with his dad...

Interrupted at this point when a boy approached me.

I quizzed this lad about his playing habits and found that he, like so many others at Meadowland, spent all his spare time on the waste land behind the school. He hardly ever went into the City. I asked how many children had bicycles and very few had working machines - a number had had a bike at some stage, usually second hand, but when it had 'gone wrong' it had got left 'in the garden', 'behind the shed' and even 'over the field'. One young fellow claimed to have three bikes, however, and one of them he proudly said was 'a Chopper'. Both Donald and Richard took part in this discussion and, as we seemed to be on things mechanical, they produced a plastic construction kit belonging to the school. It was clear they approved of such a toy but they had nothing like it of their own. Another boy piped up that he had a Mecanno set at home.

Self: These keys set out here - do you dig them out of the ground?

Boy: Nah, you go over there looking for things... they get thrown away.

Self: In the grass do you mean?

Boy: There's mud, big boulders of mud...it's by where we live. I've got another two. Look at that one... (this was quite an old key)

Same Boy: (changing the subject without prompting)  
There was a bull escaped from the slaughter house and it run off loose: it ran after a man who was coming after his car and he ran straight to it and drove off...and it ran off over the (?) ... then these policemen had to shoot it...with a rifle.

Self: Did you see this?

Boy: Nah, but...over the police station. (I did not follow his involved story and the bell went)

The group left the room

Miss S talked about a visit to what had been considered an 'unsatisfactory home' and said:-

'...it was full of quite expensive, not to my taste, but expensive furniture...If I had been a policewoman I would have been pretty certain that this was where the loot was going...It was really rather funny.'

I commented that this was one of the names that Mr Mo had mentioned, a family name that had come up time and time again.

We talked about how we saw symptoms of deprivation, as teachers,

and how what we disapproved of in such homes did not necessarily indicate any lack of intelligence.

Miss S mentioned Samantha, who I had seen earlier in the morning, and said she had serious misgivings about her home. She had suffered flu some weeks ago and had not returned in any sense recovered in the way that children from good homes did, for example, her nose had tended to bleed on and off and little was done about it. I had noticed evidence of dried blood around the girl's nose. She was 'skin and bone' said Miss S; she had about a fortnight off with flu and just has not seemed to get better.

Miss S confirmed that I had seen 5A and 5B. On a Wednesday both groups attend for remedial work at the same time.

There were no children in the remedial groups from Class 1: this top year class was looked upon as being rather special by a number of the children I had noticed.

The teacher who produced the excellent art work about the school had Class 3, 'a better class of some of the second and third years' said Miss S. She had no children from this class in her remedial group.

Class 4 was Mrs H's and it comprised 'the best first years and the poorer second years and' said Miss S 'I see some of those, including Allan, about whom I write pages'.

I queried whether Mr Mo's original figures for the remedial groups, given to me on 28 January, still applied. Miss S said that there had been some re-arrangement of the groups since then and there had been some slight changes.

She mentioned a child who had swapped both mother and father and had linked up into a new family, here it was happy and smiling and working quite well. Miss S asked:-

'Why is it doing this? You know, it ought to be throwing everything about. We have one or two who do conform...and do throw things...'

It all seemed to depend upon how acceptable the child found him or herself to be in the particular home situation in which he or she happened to be. Miss S explained:-

'Samantha could say to you quite happily "That was my step-sister". As long as they can talk...it's accepted... these people who are not good enough and yet they make up half of you.' (An allusion to when families divide and when certain members are presented to the children remaining in the original home as not at all worthy of affection)

Miss S then left me in the classroom to allow me to sort out my notes and recordings. I continued to examine Miss S's record book.

She appeared some ten minutes later to suggest that I go with her to join the Head for sherry - a most welcome suggestion.

I took second-sitting dinner with them and was given charge of a table of eight young people I had met during the morning and I found the meal arrangements excellent. It was clear that the

Head and Miss S were determined to provide a 'civilized and enjoyable' (her words) meal time for these children, many of whom never sat down in this way for a meal at home.

Afterwards I was informed how frequently local houses just did not possess a dining table, even ones which were otherwise expensively furnished (or comparatively so) and I heard about large suites, cocktail cabinets, coffee tables, hi-fi equipment and, of course, enormous t.v. sets which left no room for the traditional dining-room suite in the limited space of a council house. Children tended to eat either in the kitchen, perched on a stool or standing, or in the living room with a plate on their knees. Miss S, the Head and I had an interesting discussion about cultural norms and allowable differences, stemming from these meal-time observations.

Other points arising from my conversations with Miss S concerned (a) assembly and (b) the importance of overt affection with remedial children.

(a) Preparation for assemblies did often interfere with her remedial work. Classes in rotation prepared some quite ambitious pieces, often based upon Bible stories, but lately to do with doctors, hospitals and nurses, of which many children seemed to be totally unaware. Class teachers could not really spare the children who normally withdrew for remedial work with Miss S when such preparation was in hand.

(b) Miss S told me how she had been taught at training college to keep children scrupulously at arm's length in the classroom but she was certain that deprived children had to be reached physically before they could respond emotionally and be given the confidence to work effectively. I feel the children in her groups demonstrated her point rather well in that they clearly were at ease in her room and, no matter how monotonously they attempted to read, they were happy to do as she bid - and appreciated the many pats and hugs that came their way.

#### AFTERNOON

When afternoon school began I met briefly Miss S's remedial Group 4 (from Year II) but then withdrew to the alcove library in the corridor to concentrate upon her record book.

Later, about 2 p.m., I joined the Headmaster to visit the infant reception class (Miss K) to observe mothers arriving with nine children who were to start school in the Summer Term. I had received some briefing on two of the mothers and was told this occasion could present some interesting examples of mother/child relationships and be quite revealing about different expectations of school and teachers. In the event it was a relatively calm half-hour that I spent in this infant classroom: the mothers came, deposited their children and left with a minimum of fuss. Most of the children knew existing pupils of the reception class, who were keen to show them what was available to be played with. Just one of the newcomers cried but Miss K showed her skill with infants

and after about two minutes on her knee the little girl had quite recovered and she went off to play with some plastercine.

I remarked to Mr Mo how well turned-out the newcomers were and he said that this was generally true of children being brought to school for the first time - even those from the poorest homes. Their appearance contrasted sharply with that of many of those I had observed in the remedial groups of Miss S.

I left the school at 3.30 p.m., just as the infants were going home, having made a tentative booking with Mr Mo for 5th May. Then I hope to interview teachers of classes from which Miss S's remedial groups are drawn.

7 May, 1976 - morning

T/R (3)  
Reel A

(24)

Interviews at Meadowland Primary School

Mrs H - teacher of a <sup>first and</sup> second-year class, \* juniors.

She said that eleven of her class were withdrawn for work in the remedial reading group.

Self: Are they seriously under par..it is reading age you choose them on?

Mrs H: Mostly on reading age, yes. One of them that goes down there, his reading isn't too bad at all but he is the sort of child that does take up a lot of your time and doesn't fit in very well..er, so well with the class, and so Miss S has him down there really for..in some ways to give me a break.

Self:...He's a bit of a social problem, is he? (She agreed)  
I met all sorts there but what got me though in Miss S's group was the tremendous keenness they seemed to have...they all seemed to want to pick up a reading book and have a go..very keen to come round and tell what they could do.

Mrs H: We found this last year, because I'm keen on reading and she's, keen on them reading and last <sup>year</sup> she found...well she commented herself on the enthusiasm of the...er..well she had two groups from my class that year..and of the enthusiasm of all of them. You know there wasn't anybody that was loath to read and so we were very pleased with them last year and they seem not quite as enthusiastic the ones she has this year but..

Self: Do they..I mean they come back into your class, don't they? They go and do a term or sometimes more than a term...

Mrs H: Oh, no. They just go for an hour each day.

Self: But I mean they do this for a term or more?

Mrs H: They go for the whole year.

Self: Some of these children seem to go back to their classes eventually but this is not very usual?

Mrs H: Yes. Well last year with the class I had...she started off by having two groups out: one group she had every day, they were the children whose reading ages were two or two and a half years behind their actual age, and then another group she had twice a week - they were children who were about eighteen months behind their actual age. And then about halfway through the second term we reassessed them and most of the second group she sent back, they didn't go to her any more, and the ones that hadn't made a terrific amount of progress then they joined the poorer group who were by that time coming up to their level. Then she had just the one group, a slightly larger group, about fifteen children, every day..and she still sees some of those now when they are in the third year.

Self: But these are in fact first year aren't they?

\* Mrs H: No. Most of those she has that are mine are second year: I have a mixed first and second year class and most of my first years are.. reasonable and the ones that need to go to her from this class are second years because obviously they are the poorer second years.

Self: So they haven't caught up in the time..I see. Now you've got more boys than girls going, haven't you?

Mrs H: They are all boys that go. <sup>Self:</sup> Is there anything significant about this?...the girls seem to learn more easily, do they?

Mrs H: Yes, on the whole, most girls do seem to pick up reading more easily

But as far as this goes I have got mostly second-year boys..my second years are mostly boys..I think I have only got about four or five girls.

I referred to some notes I had made previously about her class members who went to the remedial sessions with Miss S.

Self: Ah yes, I have the group I was looking for..Andrew, Peter, Paul, Bill, Sam...but what about June?

Mrs H: June went for about half a term, I think, and Pam went for half a term...and Angela went for half a term - partly because they came up to me directly from the infants and they were people that she didn't really know as far as their reading went, and their ages seemed to indicate when we tested them the first time that they were way behind: then I think this was just nerves in a lot of cases because after about four or five weeks she said to me 'I don't think these children really need to come' and so they stopped going.

Self: Largish families are they mostly? This is something I was looking at when I came last term and it seemed as if a lot of these kids (i.e., in the remedial groups) came from ~~large~~ <sup>very big</sup> families.

Mrs H: Yes, a lot of them come from big families and you can get families that have got nine or ten children..

Self: Now those three girls we've just mentioned - I don't know if this is right but they told me...- June, for example, had a family of five, eight, <sup>seven</sup> six, and ten months...that's quite a fair sized family, isn't it?

Mrs H: Yes, it's a split family....

Self: Yes, that's right, there's one forty-eight in there; he's presumably a dad, or is it a mum?

Mrs H: Yes, probably: but she will always tell you ~~that~~ 'I have two dads' and I always say 'Aren't you lucky?'..'I wish I had two dads'.. but she has two dads and she sees both of them and her mother is re-married and she lives with her mother and step-father but she does see her father and, you know, it seems quite an amicable arrangement.

A girl came into the room and was sent back to Miss S. - taking her pencil.

Self: I understand there are one or two children in your class living in unusual family arrangements...Angela seems to have little brother, Sidney, handicapped, possibly spastic, and unable to walk at all and this seems to weigh upon Angela's mind.

Mrs H: Yes, Angela is made to be a lot older than she is at home, and made to look after Helen, the younger girl. Helen is at this school and she is made to look after her because mother's time is taken up so much with Sidney: he is a complete handful, he is completely handicapped.

Self: Helen would be a girl of five, would she?

Mrs H: No, she is top infants and so she would be getting on for seven...

Self: And then Pam...large family again...there's Mark, sixteen, Sheila, twenty-one, Pam, eight, Andrew, six. No, that's not a large family: it's four isn't it?

Mrs H: Yes, it's four, but I don't know if there is a split there but there is sort of two definite...there is two older ones and two younger ones. Whether it was a split family or not I don't know. She's a well adjusted child....



Self: Well, all three seem to have managed in the reading sense. Do they stand out in this class in any way?

Mrs H: Angela does, Angela is high.?.

Self: This could be a compensation in some sense, from being restricted at home maybe?

Mrs H: She's pretty well treated at home; I mean she's one of the few children in this class that go out and about and that has grandparents that take an interest in them and Granny often baby-sits for them and they go up to grandparents, and they go out and about a lot. But she also had another brother who died...he would have been about five now...

Self: This, incidentally, is not a case of deprivation at all, is it?

Mrs H: No...it's just a case that they have this brother who takes up all the time...

Self: But quite honestly, this is what I am trying to get at. It's the way people see this thing deprivation that interests me, you see. You get politicians, like Sir Keith Joseph, sounding off about the subject in an overall way and it seems to me so often they cover up such a lot. I mean student-teachers<sup>and others</sup> who read these things...jump to conclusions and they go forward with great big stereotypes and they classify everybody and it isn't until somebody like yourself who really works with them starts to say what it is all about in detail that the thing starts to become clear...When I was teaching I was quite happy to accept generalizations all the time and since I have been looking at sociology I have tried to break things down so that we really are talking about...

Mrs H: Yes, I don't think you can really say that Angela is deprived of anything except, perhaps, attention..because Sidney needs so much attention..and so Angela has to get it in the classroom.

Self: Now I have all sorts of categories<sup>of deprivation</sup>/I used to play with as I tried to work out specific questions...but specific questions are much too cut and dried...and now I prefer to let things roam around...You said deprived of attention, now there was one category I used to use called emotional deprivation but it's not that though is it?

Mrs H: No, I don't think so. In actual fact she probably gets as much attention at home as another child would get, but Sidney gets more...Sidney has to have attention...She's very fond of Sidney: she doesn't hate him or feel any resentment towards him.

Self: What age is Sidney, about five?

Mrs H: No he's younger, about three...he's just started at nursery school two mornings a week...a special school, I think.

Self: He's picked up to go there, is he?

Mrs H: Well, either that or his father runs him there. They have a car.

Self: So Angela is very lively and there are no real problems?

Mrs H: No, money-wise they have ample..

Self: Neither Pam nor June are any problem?...Well June, you did say, they've got this sort of split family thing which...

Mrs H: Well it's quite an open thing round here you know, that you have two dads or two mums, or...

Self: This is an interesting side though, isn't it? It opens up the cultural pattern of the neighbourhood. I've come across it all the

time <sup>but</sup> ~~that~~ there is no sort of heavy moral criticism, is there?...Or is there? Have you come across any?

Mrs H: Well I did. It was rather funny with one child: she came and said to me 'We're moving' and I said 'Oh, what a shame' and 'Why are you moving?' and the answer came out really pat, 'Well, Daddy's knocking around with another woman up the road. You can't hold your head up when you go out because all the neighbours know about it you see?'. I thought that well that's an adult ~~speech~~ speaking and it's something she has picked up...But as a rule you don't hear much criticism in that sort of way from the children. They just seem to accept it as a natural thing..

Self: What about this great mass of boys that don't read very well? The first one I have got is Andrew..

Mrs H: Well Andrew is, huh, one of the big problems. He's been pushed from pillar to post and somewhere along the line people keep letting him down, particularly women; he had a fad, a very big down on women, when he came here. He wouldn't trust any of us and he had to have attention all the time. And he is one of the bigger problems but he's been under the psychiatrist at various times and at various schools and I don't think he has stayed at any school as long as he's been here. (She mentioned two other schools in poorer parts of the City) And they keep moving <sup>him</sup> round and you see he never really settles down. I was probably <sup>in</sup> getting him when he had been here probably nine months. Mrs Q had the first dealings with him and I think he just regarded us as another stopping place, you know, 'I'll be here a couple of weeks...'.  
Self: But he stayed though...

Mrs H: But he stayed, and things seem to have settled down quite a bit more at home and he will now talk to us. We could not get him to talk about much before; well, nothing that was important anyway - he would ramble on about all sorts of fantasy things...of father having big accidents, of father doing this that and the other...oh yes, according to Andrew, his father has done all sorts of things, you know. Father was in the last World War and he survived a bomb by getting under a sofa, he's been in a concentration camp..he's had accidents down coal mines and all this sort of thing. You have to just pick out of it the things that you can take as being the ones that are true.

Self: This baby, Graham is it? He's had a bit of trouble - a broken leg, it got stuck in his cot someone said. His dad works at the bakery now, is that right?

Mrs H: I don't know: the last time Andrew mentioned it he just said that Daddy wasn't working...that's another thing they do rather tend to chop and change jobs, you know.

Self: Well, in this area, if you are an unskilled worker I suppose it is not easy, is it? I mean I've come across a lot of unemployment...

Mrs H: I think there is a bit...a fair amount of unemployment...but the children aren't deprived money-wise I don't think. There are very few homes round here where they compare with the area I came from..I've seen homes that are a lot worse than the ones round here.

Self: Mr M was saying that there are large numbers of free meals here. Andrew is all right is he?

Mrs H: We did send forms to Andrew's parents...but they didn't fill them in. But we do have trouble with the dinners. They do pay, but you have to sort of take it when it comes...

Self: What happens if a kid gets behind with dinner money?

Mrs H: Well, with Andrew he just stays away. You know, we've tried to

talk to him about it but...

Self: But he would worry about a thing like this, wouldn't he?

Mrs H: Yes, he worries. Now he worries - at one time he would not have done.

Self: For an eight-year-old to worry like this is...well it's interesting, isn't it?

Mrs H: Yes, but it should be something that he realizes..you know?

Self: Well, he's obviously got some of these deprivation things, hasn't he, poor lad? He's had a very unsettled sort of home I should think.

Mrs H: Yes, yes - he's had a very unsettled home.

Self: His measurements are pretty low I should think - reading age, IQ?

Mrs H: Reading age, yes. He had a real hang-up about reading and I think in some ways he probably reads better than he lets on but he doesn't trust his own judgment in words, you know? He'll look at a word and....

Self: He lacks confidence?

Mrs H: Yes.

Self: It would be interesting to try and get behind this. You know a kid like that, does he like school, do you think? Is school a pleasant, secure sort of place? Whereas there is muddle at home, perhaps it is becoming so?

Mrs H: It is now. He accepts us. But at one time, at lunch-time, he had to sit on Miss S's table. To start with it had to almost be next to Miss S and then it got that if, as long as he was in the smaller of the two dining rooms, then that was all right. And then last term we were all quite pleased when he decided that he would like to have his dinner in the big dining room. So obviously he came to feel quite secure going to have dinner but it took a year and a bit to get him to this stage.

Self: I have looked around at their dress and it seems that most of them are fairly well turned out. What does Andrew look like? In fact I've just seen him haven't I? He was reading just now wasn't he?

Mrs H: Yes. He has a black jumper with a nice bright pattern on it on today. He's always pretty well dressed and it's not just surface dressing too. When he gets undressed for P.E. he's usually got his P.E. kit with him and his underclothes are good. I mean a lot of these children ..the top layer isn't too bad but the underneath is..you know..

Self: Yes, and in this weather...

Mrs H: Well a lot of them I think..well, the clothes aren't too bad, but I think a lot of these clothes are bought on tick...because you get a tremendous amount of children with the same sort of things...a jumper pattern crops up time and time again and it's either been bought at one of these parties that they have - you know, these clothing parties that they have around here, or on..clubs which somebody in the area runs, in which they can pay so much a week.

Self: Yes, well Paul is the next one I've got on the list here. He's still in the remedial group, isn't he?

Mrs H: Oh, yes, he will be next year as well. They go on from year to year if they haven't made satisfactory progress. I mean ~~Andrew~~ <sup>Andrew</sup> will be there too..he might make four months progress this year, I don't know how much progress he's made this year, but he might make four months progress

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this year. But if he was two years behind when he went to Miss S this year, then he's two and a half years behind next year, you see, and despite the progress that he's made...he's making progress but we had a lot of trouble with absence this year with Andrew too and the first term he was ~~here~~ with me it was one week here and one week away, one week here, one week away - a regular pattern.

Self: I wonder if it was anything to do with dinner money. You mentioned earlier on..

Mrs H: No, it wasn't that: or, at least, to our knowledge it wasn't that. The next term he did, I think it was a complete half-term without being away and then the trouble started with dinner money and he's away when his mother's out of credit on his dinner money, sort of thing...which is a shame because while we were having him here every day the problems of behaviour were getting less. Behaviour problems were always worse on a Monday morning, well, all day Monday: and Tuesday it wouldn't be too bad..but then if he had a week off you see you've not just got the week-end to contend with, he's had nine days not conforming..

Self: And then you have to get him into shape to remind him where he is, I suppose? Paul, surname changed from Gordon to Evans...this is because his mother re-married, I suppose?

Mrs H: I don't think she re-married, in fact I don't know...

Self: We don't need to really, do we?

Mrs H: She came over here to live with Mr Evans..~~whether~~ they changed their names; ~~I do not know~~ whether they've since married I do not know, but...

Self: The school doesn't need to I suppose, does it? Isn't it just the look of the thing?

Mrs H: That's right, it is not up to us to judge...

Self: The educational psychologist made some mention about him apparently. He didn't score very well when he was tested. Does he look pretty down at heel?

Mrs H: Yes.

Self: I rather gathered so; in fact earlier discussions suggested to me that in answer to the question 'What is a deprived child?' the answer could well be 'Well that is'.

Mrs H: Yes, you would pick him out as being a deprived child.

Self: How big is he? He's quite big isn't he?

Mrs H: No. Paul's not, Andrew is..Paul's not very big.

Self: Someone suggested that he might be a bit of a bully.

Mrs H: No, he is bullied...he's the scapegoat of the class. He's the one they always pick on no matter what happens...they are quite likely to turn round and say Paul Evans did it, even though Paul might be away that day.

Self: Paul and Andrew go together a lot, do they?

Mrs H: Er, not really - Andrew looks down on Paul, in more ways than one, he's taller than him and he's much better dressed than Paul and he will stand up for himself, and..he's rather proud in a way, Andrew, but Paul grovels.

Self: Does he? Do we know what sort of job Mr Evans does?

Mrs H: Well, at the moment he calls himself a self-employed man but he

has just had trouble with the law and at the moment he's out of work.. whether he has gone back to work or not this term I don't know I haven't seen him, but towards the end of last term he came up and asked me if I would like some pictures drawn for the children in the classroom. He draws...he's quite a reasonable artist.

Self: Portraits, are they?

Mrs H: No, he does cartoon figures...

Self: This was his line of business...you said he was self-employed?

Mrs H: No, not really. I think he just called himself self-employed and hired himself to anyone who wanted building, or general labourers and that sort of thing, but he didn't work for anybody in particular he just did general jobs.

Self: But Paul has not had to go on free meals..?

Mrs H: Yes, he is on free meals...he is the sort of child who for about half a term he had a pair of trousers on that were split down one seam, they were split and frayed down one seam and they stayed split and frayed for the whole half term. You know, it was a matter of when it started of about ten stitches but by the time it had finished the trousers were hardly holding together...

Self: Mum doesn't work so you would think she would be..

Mrs H: Mum is pregnant...very pregnant. But Paul is often kept at home from school and when he is then a note comes back saying how he wasn't well or...Paul had to do the work; he has to do most of the shopping and that sort of thing.

Self: Interesting to try and project ahead, isn't it, with a lad like Paul. What's going to happen to him? He'll probably go to Edward Gorton Secondary Modern School...He might pick up at some stage, I suppose?

Mrs H: I doubt it; I think he'll be a general dogsbody all his life really.

Self: I wonder what sort of job he will do? There is no way of knowing, is there?

Mrs H: Well, if he does anything, I think it will be something like roadsweeping or something like that...that doesn't take too much energy and you can go at your own pace without someone telling you what to do and what not to do, or else he will just be on the dole all the time..I can't see him making much. He really is deprived that child. You know, his mother is the sort that makes a fuss of him if she knows that you're around and...him the rest of the time I think. He's the oldest one of three or four.

Self: Well, I've got here Malcolm, 27, that's probably his dad, someone 26, that must be his mum, Paddy 4, Jean 3, Dennis 1...and you say there is a baby on the way.

Mrs H: Paddy has just started school..Malcolm is six or seven..I thought there was just the one girl at home...

Self: My notes could well be wrong; I got this information partly from Miss S and partly from the kids as I was moving around.... Bill, he's not a bad lad is he?

Mrs H: (hesitatingly) No..as far as I know his father works on and off at intervals. He has a lot of older brothers and sisters and he is uncle to several small children, one of which died just recently and they accept children dying almost as they seem to accept animals

disappearing and dying. I don't know why...there didn't seem to be an awful lot of fuss about that baby dying...You see they know the child is there one minute, then they know it's ill, and then they don't see it again...Well, if you just say it's died then it doesn't mean an awful lot to them really..

Self: No it doesn't at that age, I suppose. But he (Bill) takes a fairly <sup>glum</sup> attitude to life doesn't he?

Mrs H: He's got a miserable little face...He has got a sense of humour, not as much as his sister. His sister was in my class last year..

Self: Marilyn, is that?

Mrs H: Yes, Marilyn. She has terrible speech problems...There again, I suppose they are a deprived family, partly because of the size of it I suppose; and partly because of the mentality. I don't think any of them are over bright..

Self: Oh, yes. I wrote the family against Marilyn. It is Marilyn ~~plus~~ <sup>class</sup> three is it?

Mrs H: ~~Class~~ <sup>Class</sup> two: Miss S does not have anyone from class three, it's the one class that's really an average class.

Self: Bill <sup>(Bill's mum)</sup> sometimes takes his book home to read to his mum.

Mrs H: Oh yes, he takes his book home nearly every night. He's a worrier, you know, his first questions when he arrives in the morning are 'What time do we go down to Miss S today?' and 'When are we going to do this?'. He likes to have everything set out first thing in the morning...He likes to know when I'm going to do things and what I'm going to do and...er...he's quite keen to please, a bit under-handed.. but I think that's a trait in a lot of the children found here.. A lot of them have to be at home because if they're caught doing anything they're half murdered sometimes.

Self: That's an interesting one, isn't it?

Mrs H: Yes, but I think this is why they do it a lot; and it's very catching, if you get a few in the class that are a bit under-handed they soon pass it on to the ones that aren't normally..

Self: This reminds me very much of a discussion I had with some students concerning the doctrine of 'mens rea'.....(I related the usual stereotypes found in sociology of education text books concerning middle class and working <sup>class</sup> attitudes to blame and punishment)...kids are punished, or told off, not because they've done something but they've done something with a certain motive...e.g., why a kid breaks a window...whereas in the rougher working-class families if a kid breaks a window...why he broke it is immaterial, they won't go into the reason...He'll get half murdered, as you just said...I've had one or two examples of this here...And this makes them you say a little bit shifty and perhaps not always very truthful....

Mrs H: Then the children here are very...how can I put it...it's almost like a village, rather cut off from other villages..an awful lot of inter-marriage and the community is in on itself. There is a bingo hall and perhaps a whist drive or the local disco or something..all goes on in the village..and you get people marrying into the same family and that sort of thing. They all work in the same place, perhaps all work <sup>on</sup> the same ~~farm~~..?..It's very much like that here.

Self: But have you got this centre thing? You have some bingo I do know, I've heard from people, but is there a lot of communal activity here?

Mrs H: Well there's a community centre placing on the estate that does

dancas and things like that: I've only been there once since the Brownies held a disco there and I've got a fair amount of Brownies in the class...and I more or less got bludgeoned into it. In actual fact one of the mothers bought a ticket and said 'Take this to Mrs H' ...The place is there and I think perhaps the children and the teenagers use it more than the others. There's a youth club just down the Salem Road...

Self: But that is not on the estate though, is it?

Mrs H: No, it's not on the estate, it's just off the estate. But they rather seem to go; I don't know whether it's because people have moved from this area to an estate in Salem, but they do seem to go more to Salem when they are teenagers for their entertainment rather than into the City.

Self: Is there a village hall in Salem? There would be, I suppose.

Mrs H: Yes, I think so.

Self: Now when you are saying about the youth club, you are not thinking about the one right up in the City, by the traffic lights?

Mrs H: No, I was thinking of the one...near the swimming pool...They do go down there.

Self: Now, it's getting near to playtime is it?

Mrs H: Yes, do you want to turn that off? People will be walking in and out....

I switched off but as we were still left alone I switched on again.

Mrs H: ...ludo.

Self: They don't play much in the way of indoor games at all?

Mrs H: No, outside, they play outside in the street...but very few play inside.

Self: That's the impression I have got talking to them. You know 'What do you do in your spare time?' and a common answer is 'Go over the field' and things like that.

Mrs H: Well, it's watch telly or go out.

A child came in to be told by Mrs H that he could go straight outside and that the bell would go in two minutes.

Mrs H: Now things like that they're deprived of..conversation, you can't hold conversations with these children. Simple words that they don't know... well, I told them a story a little while ago that had a twist at the end of it about snowdrops and at the end of it they all just sat there looking at me completely blankly and I said 'Well, did you understand the story?'. Puzzled frowns appeared on several faces and I said 'Well what's snowdrops?', and nobody knew what a snowdrop was...I had several suggestions as to what it was but nobody could actually tell me what a snowdrop was. And they can't use words, they just don't have the ability; they don't talk at home with their parents.

Self: Looking at Peter: that's a vast family he belongs to, an enormous one..

Mrs H: Yes, all boys...they have a very devoted mother though...I mean she is the sort who will help pay towards a football kit for the team ..and she encourages all the boys..all the boys are mad keen on football and she comes up and watches them and that sort of thing...So she does take an interest in what they are doing and she knows the boys' limitations

and accepts that, provided they are happy at school, and getting on to their best ability....

The bell rang and I switched off.



7 May, 1976 - morning

T/R (3)  
Reel (a) from 48

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Interviews at Meadowland Primary School (continued)

Mr 'H' - teacher of third year class, juniors.  
and fourth

Self: You were saying you were very surprised about the area..middle class city having great problems, well I was put on to the area by County headquarters and the local educational psychologist directed me to this particular neighbourhood...he almost worked out a league table for me of deprived areas in the City..and this neighbourhood came pretty high on the list. You were surprised too: you didn't come here when you were at college did you? (Mr H attended the local college of education)

Mr H.: No, no, not at all, really..I just passed on the Salem Road and the Salem Road looks, well...

Self: Yes, I've found Salem very pleasant..especially down by the river..

Mr H.: Yes, that's really Fitwell.

Self: Of course. Now that's not very far from here, in fact Mr M<sup>o</sup> said that he had taken kids walking across the fields to there.

Now, which class is yours.

Mr H.: Class two.

Self: And you pull out a number of children for Miss S's group, quite a lot. Mainly boys are they?

Mr H.: Yeah, they're mainly boys.

Self: ..Class two is fourth year, is it?

Mr H.: Third and fourth.

(Norman..

Self: Well I've seen quite a lot of your pupils, haven't I? David..Robert..

Mr H.: Yeah, that's my little group.

Self: Now they're there (i.e., in the remedial group) basically because of their reading age. They've had a test and their reading age is well down? Is that really why they find themselves with Miss S?

Mr H.: Well, basically, it's because their all-round ability is down..reading, that's what they concentrate on...There are two or three of them that have <sup>got</sup> a reading age of six - 6.8, 6.9.

Self: To give some background, the reason why I am looking at the kids who find themselves in the remedial group is because this might provide quite a good sample of kids who are seen by teachers as being deprived in one way or another..and I must say it is working out very much that way... Would you say that any of these children have an overall look of deprivation about them?

Mr H.: In their physical appearance do you mean?

Self: Well, yes, as you see them.

Mr H.: Norman and Dennis, no. Well, as you probably know, Norman has only got his father at home, but Dennis's mum, Mrs Carter, looks after him.. almost like a mother really. So, to look at, no you wouldn't, not those two.

Self: They're quite well turned out?

Mr H.: Yes, they're well looked after in that way.

Self: But has it upset Norman (his mother left some three years ago)?

Mr H.: ...that was all done before I came, I've ~~been here~~ for the last two years...you've met him..he's very cheerful. (had Norman)

Self: Yes he is, that's right.

Mr H.: And what it was that's a great shame about this, Miss S and I talk about it, is that he is probably one of the most interesting to talk to and he can retain information in his head but he just cannot put it down on paper.

Self: I'm surprised about this because..in his reading he has tremendous confidence and he has a go but he does not work it out somehow, I wonder why it is, it may be a blockage in confidence, it's hard to say..

Mr H.: I mean that is what it is like sometimes, there's a pile of information or a pile of ability in behind something..

Self: It could be sparked off somehow, perhaps? When he gets older maybe: how old is he now?

Mr H.: He is eleven now.

Self: What about Dennis? Dennis's mum is a great feature here, a second mother to Norman, isn't she? How would you compare Dennis with Norman; is Dennis much more confident? read

Mr H.: His actual reading is higher, he can/a lot more words..yet Norman is far more sensible..

Self: Dennis has had a much more secure background, I suppose.

Then I referred to ~~some~~ Miss S's comments on Dennis and found there were criticisms, e.g., could be babyish.

Self: Now what about Raymond Turner?

Mr H.: Well I've had Raymond for two years now, well this is the second year ..there has been a definite change in the last year. When I first came his attitude to work was home-based and his attitude to school work was..well.. but this year he has had a go at <sup>almost</sup> every piece of work he has had to do... actually his ability is very low but his attitude has improved a lot.

(This evidence conflicts with that given about the boy by Miss S)

Self: He looks pretty scruffy, if he is the one I am thinking of.

Mr H.: Very.

Self: Thinking of deprivation again, is this because he doesn't get much encouragement at home, or don't they care, or...?

Mr H.: ..there is no encouragement towards school at all, no. School is a...in a sense, she's quite nice in a way, but there is nothing geared towards school...She came along to open day, she was one of the few parents who came during the day to see what was happening; whether that was just to have a look or..

Self: But perhaps if there isn't any money there..maybe they're jolly hard up with his dad out of work and there aren't many jobs going, are there, at the moment?

Mr H.: No, there's a lot of them, lots of brothers..it's a big family, he's always talking about them. They all look like him as well.

Self: Do they: are there any others in this school?

Mr H.: No, they're all at the Gorton now. I see a couple of them in the morning; they look just like him.

Self: Norman has a vast family, doesn't he?

Mr H.: No, not at home he doesn't

Self: Oh, I see, his true sisters live with Mum, and then another sister lives with an aunt somewhere else in the City.

Mr H.: Yes, they all came up last year. Mr Moore came up. I think there's an interest there: it probably stems from Mrs Carter.

Self: Oh yes, she's pushing them on is she? She is an ideal sort of mum is she, Mrs Carter?

Mr H.: It seems to be, and she certainly, er, sees to them all the time, you know..and there is one thing..they are genuinely happy...

Self: Now to Sam..the baby of the family..quite a good family on the face of it?

Mr H.: Well...

Self: Oh, he shows up in the class as being a baby! He is pretty well turned out though? Is there a problem?

Mr H.: ..he will play and be quite tough with the other children; he's not soft in that sense. <sup>in the classroom</sup> But/instead of coming to ask for something he will come and whine for it..he whines like a young child..I've tried to break him out of this, it works sometime..the trouble is it works at home..

Self: I suppose he will go to Edward Gorton, like most of them?

Mr H.: Probably. Mind you last year they split them up more than they have done in the past but the dimmest ones tend to go to the Gorton..

Self: Is Matthew still about? I thought he was supposed to be moving.

Mr H.: No Matthew's still here. He wouldn't come and ask about anything

he'll just carry on. You wouldn't think it but he shows quite a lot of common sense, you wouldn't think it from his general academic ability...you might expect him not to show so much common sense. But I always have high expectations...

Self: Len Wood, what about him?

Mr H.: Now he's another one who's sensible...

Self: Now rather than go right through all of them...you've got, what is it, twenty two of them (in the remedial group, i.e.)...how many would you want to pick out as showing deprivation? How about Josephine Long? She's

Mr H.: Yeah, she's left. Yes, she could be a good example because... (left? all last year she was in Mrs H's class and she was very rarely at school and when she was there she was not very interested.

Self: Was that because her mother was ill do you think?

Mr H.: No, I don't think so because her mother didn't...And then when her (ty)mother died her aunties\*took over, she was in my class then, and then she was always there, willing to have a go and her confidence gradually grew... And then she was ill one day, she stayed in Miss S's room for a little while, and I had to go to the doctor's that night and she was there with her Auntie when I got there. It was as if it was her own mother who had taken her...though I wonder whether her own mother would have taken her there.

Self: Yes, I have a set question about substitute mums. Her mother died quite suddenly, did she? You don't know the background?

Mr H.: I don't know...

Self: How about Kenneth Hall...

Mr H.: Yes, from Shropshire. His dad's been up a couple of times wanting to know what he can do to help...is there anything he can do in the holidays to keep Kenneth going along. He's obviously interested and his mum seems pls with his progress. He settled in very quickly: he wasn't a new boy after a couple of weeks really.

Self: Resourceful people from the West Country. Is he obviously West Country?

Mr H.: Yes, the roll of the 'r' and one or two things.

Self: He's a very keen bird-watcher apparently?

Mr H.: Oh yes, always watches all birds, but his general ability is very low.

Self: What about the Stentons, that's a family I have heard of before?

Mr H.: Dad's just been nabbed; he's been caught four times and stolen £3000 this time, found to be in possession of a sawn-off shot gun...and he has been inside before; I think he'll be away for a while again and at the moment the kids are being taken off by foster people, to give mum a break.

Self: Is that so: is this being organized by the social services?

Mr H.: Yeah, they're going off to day (?) places to give mum a break so that she can get healthy again...because there's a lot of them...two twins and two girls are all first year secondaries and they ~~were~~ quite a handful when they were here.

Self: Well apparently the mum found this lad, Nevil, quite unmanageable at home with father away...What happened to his spots?

Mr H.: They're all right...

Self: It's another interesting thing in deprivation...deprived of medical attention...

Mr H.: Well he came up to me and he said he had a spot. I found it was chicken pox...and it was at the infectious stage, or about to be, and we had to take him home. But as far as I can make out it was just lack of thought by the mother, rather than wanting to just push him off...she just couldn't cope.

Self: ...Then I suppose some middle class mums aren't that observant are they?...perhaps some kids neglected in this way become quite tough?

Now Marilyn, I've met her somewhere else haven't I? Oh she's got a brother.

Mr H.: ...yes, Marilyn struggles with everything.

Self: She's had some therapy, hasn't she?

Mr H.: Yes, she has therapy at the moment. When I first had her in my class I could not understand what she was saying, even if she came out with just one word or sometimes with two, her friends would and they would come out and tell me and gradually...I can understand her now..

Self: She's a pretty scruffy one, is she, with lots of reach-me-down clothes?

We discussed the family ages given on a chart provided by

Marilyn and Mr H was sceptical about her dad's age given as 33.

Mr H.: Well I had a birthday last year and they asked me how old I was and I said 'Seventy five' and they showed no surprise. (Mr H is probably still in his twenties!)

Self: You don't seem to have any what I would call real problem children, do you? Presumably, as you say, they aren't much good at reading and their general all-round ability is low.

Mr H.: It's very much like being on a tight-rope in a way. They can burst into tears at any moment. Not all of the..but I've been just talking to them telling them about something that has been done, not shouting at them, just telling them and explaining what was wrong about it...I always think, for that reason you know..I can understand if you were bellowing at them and pressurizing them but just talking to them..

Self: Do you mean they're very insecure perhaps?

Mr H.: That's what I mean you know; that's what it is. You feel that the last line is gone sometimes..But not with just these kids, I find this with others too sometimes..

Self: But they're eleven years old in some cases and I suppose a certain amount of their insecurity might come from the fact that their time at junior school is coming to an end and they are going to move on to the unknown. But would you say that kids from more satisfactory homes perhaps are better adjusted to this?

Mr H.: I think perhaps that the idea of having something explained to them about their behaviour is better understood, lots of these kids are so used to being told what to do without being given an explanation..'Don't do that' is what they're used to, without being given a reason.

Self: This came out last session with Mrs H. She said they're used to being thumped and chased and screamed at and I think she said this made them a bit devious..

Mr H.: ...we find that they can't get on with each other for very long: they can't work in groups.

Self: Is that so? Now Miss S said something along these lines at an earlier visit. She said that there's a lot of fighting goes along among adults, physical beating up you know, and her theory is that they do this purely and simply because they haven't the words to talk the thing out. It's a sort of language deprivation if you like and they get to the point when they feel, and they scream, and then they thump, and she reckons the kids are very much the same: they just lack the vocabulary to say what they want to...

Mr H.: Well, somebody bumps into someone, instead of waiting for the apology they say 'You do that again and I'll beat your head in' - always. Very few kids - you know - and a lot of the girls are like this as well, they'd rather scream round first and then...There have been a couple of times when I've got two people together to find out what's actually happened but you never...

- Some words missed in changing tape -

Self: You know they say it's deliberate council policy to put all the problems in one place; it makes a certain sense but it wouldn't stand up if it were challenged, I suppose, how managers have tremendous powers. It would be, I suppose, on the ~~decision~~ volition of the housing managers that this sort of thing happens.

Mr H.: I'm only speaking from what I see..This also is the place where they have decided to put the gypsy encampment...

Self: So this is the place that is going to be written..not exactly the shanty town, but the down-town area...

I'm not stopping you am I, do you want to get off?

Mr. H.: Miss S said half-past-eleven and so perhaps we had better stop..

Self:-Well that's some jolly interesting leads there, looking at the kids in this way, this is really getting down to the nitty-gritty..I won't of course divulge actual cases but 'Deprived in a Cathedral City' might well be a title at some stage. Jolly useful and many thanks..I'll be around..

23  
de(b) to 5.

21 May, 1976 - afternoon

Participant-observation and interviewing at Meadowland C.P. School

On arrival at 1.30 p.m. I was shown into Mrs H's room where her Indoor Games Club was in progress. The children, about thirty in number and many recognizable from Miss S's remedial groups, were playing a variety of indoor games, from the traditional draughts, dominoes and snakes and ladders through some strange card games to a very sophisticated crime and punishment game which was played on the lines of monopoly, with a good deal of excitement. One or two were doing what might be classified as school work: the boy who first approached me certainly was in this category. He came to me with his maths work book to show off his efforts, declaring that he liked maths better than any game. I checked his sums for him - they were games involving addition and subtraction and sometimes multiplication - and found not one mistake.

Then I was approached by Sally, a first year girl met earlier in Miss S's Group 6. She explained to me the card game she was playing with two friends and I was persuaded to join in. I think it was called 'Fish'.

Paul, a Year II boy in Miss S's Group 4, then made himself known to me. He was playing draughts with a friend and they were taking the game very seriously. They both said that they played draughts at home.

Mrs H moved around the room giving helpful advice and settling the very few disputes that arose. 'You're a cheat you are' said one of the girls playing the crime and punishment game to a fellow player and interested spectators echoed her cry until the boy being accused changed his counters. Mrs H watched this game for a few minutes to make sure it continued legitimately: she called out the requirements for each move for about six more moves. The money distribution is tricky in this game but if the notes and counters are not right play becomes impossible.

I played the card game 'Fish' until I managed to get a boy who was watching to take my hand. Mrs H told me that it was a game they played at home. Asked if the children playing the monopoly-style game would ever finish it Mrs H told me they would not: apparently they reach a point when they are happy to pack up. The boy who owns the game gives the lead on this and the others comply with his wishes.

Mrs H tries to see that the games equipment is used properly and that children do not 'mess about': she does her best to see that their hands are clean and that sticky counters are avoided. Sally, at my elbow again, seemed to have the most deeply engrained stickiness possible on her hands and was delighted to be told by Mrs H to go and wash. On return her hands were less sticky but not truly clean: it was wondered whether this grubbiness of hands and around the mouth and nose was a vital characteristic of children seen by their teachers as 'deprived'. Sharon asked if I was going to let Mrs H hear what I was recording in the classroom and I replied that she certainly could listen to a play-back if she was interested. Mrs H interjected that she was not interested in what Sally had to say: she heard her talking all day long, she could

not stop. Sally then launched into a description of her talkativeness at home and how her family and many relations responded. Surely this child cannot be 'verbally deprived'?

Sally volunteered the information that her Auntie Ida and Uncle Pat were in prison. Mrs H asked what they had done.

'My uncle stole a gold watch and a (missed) from up the shop'

said Sally and agreed with Mrs H that it was 'a bit silly'. Sally continued that her Uncle Pat 'got put away for murder'. Mrs H was incredulous and told Sally that she thought that was a bit of an exaggeration. Sally protested that it was true and that she had been to the Crown Court. The other children's noise prevented me from hearing all this conversation but Mrs H elicited from Sally that this had occurred last September and her uncle was in the City Prison. Mrs H asked if he was enjoying himself there and Sally replied with a vehement 'No', whereupon Mrs H told the assembled group that this was what happened when 'you do things you shouldn't do'.

Then a boy spoke up about an uncle 'who lives with my dad's brother': he was able to 'move around without even being locked up'. He went on '...and my Uncle Doug's my dad's brother too'. There was a story of some kind of crime here but I could not follow it. This boy had been playing cards and I asked him if he played at home: he told me that he did and that he beats his dad every time he plays. The card game was 'Fish' but the boy said they also played games called 'Trumps' and 'Crazy Eight'.

A number of children in the group played various kinds of 'Patience' - 'Chinese Patience' was a popular example. It was easy to play while the television was on. The last-mentioned boy said he 'could do it without looking'. He described the room in which he watched television; there was 'a big space in the middle where we play cards and have dinner and things'. Remembering Miss S's assertion at an earlier interview that few of the children actually sat down at a table for meals with their families I probed a little on this point but received only non-committal answers. The television sets in the homes of this group were all black and white. Record players were usual and my main informant boasted a hi-fi in the room previously mentioned. He said:-

'My Auntie Lorna and Uncle Ken have got one to theirselves ...and you know Laurie, well he's got a whole record-player to hisself.'

I asked if he (Laurie) kept it in his own room but was confused by my informant's reply that he (Laurie) kept it in his (the informant's) room. He went on to say how Auntie Lorna and Uncle Ken had to sleep in his bed. Apparently he now slept in the same bed as this younger boy Leslie and it was 'rather a squash' he told me quite happily - the younger lad jumped on all concerned early in the morning ('about six or five in the morning'). Mrs H asked how many bedrooms they had and the answer came as three - his father and mother slept in one room, Auntie Lorna and Uncle Ken in another and in the third room - 'the other little room' - slept six children! There were three beds in this room. The boy told how two dogs and one cat slept on top of him and he enjoyed telling us how often he was bitten and scratched by them.

Then we heard something of Sally's overcrowded house. She told us

of her breakfast that morning - cornflakes, jelly, ice cream '...and then we had five cokes...and we had shredded wheat... oh yes, and then I had bacon, eggs...' Mrs H said that that was not what she had the other morning: 'What was it you brought in your pocket?' she asked. Sally replied:-

'Jelly and cornflakes...no, not jelly and cornflakes... cornflakes and jam.'

I queried if she meant in her pocket and she assured me that this was the case. We heard from other children about their breakfasts and there were few surprises. One child said 'We have to have grapefruit' and there was a general cry of 'Ugh!'. Cakes seemed general breakfast diet - sometimes home-made.

I asked if they enjoyed school dinners and they all seemed to do - those in receipt of free dinners being anxious that I should know about them; the motive seemed to be that it was more clever not to have to pay. One child claimed:-

'My dad can't afford to pay for our dinners 'cos there's eight in the family.'

This brought on a further contribution about family size:-

'...that's ten people, and then there'll be Uncle Cliff and Uncle Peter when they come out of prison and that will be twelve.'

My informant was not sure when that was going to be but Uncle Peter had been in longer than Uncle Cliff.

Then we heard of a man who had gone back into prison; the girl telling us did not know why but she thought he had done something wrong the same as her dad - they had tried to open something metal down by the river. Then the story changed a little and we were told that her dad wanted to get some metal so that he could get some money 'because we're poor'. Mrs H responded 'Ah! We are sorry for you'.

'My uncle is in the middle of the Pacissic' a boy proudly told me. I asked what he was doing there and was told that he was with his daughter, Jane, followed by:-

'...and me Auntie Sheila is over there - I've got two Auntie Sheilas. Do you know how old my Mum and Dad is? My Mum's 29, getting on for 30, and my Dad's 28...and I am the oldest out of the lot because I'm 9 this year...'

and so on through the family.

Mrs H commented on the fact that many of these children aged 7-11 played cards for money. It was about all that they and their families did on a Sunday. 'Blackjack' was popular. 'Notice the way they hold their cards...they are used to cards... sometimes it is about the only thing they are good at.' Some of the other games she thought they played in the strangest of ways and said:-

'I don't see how you can help people who don't think first.'

I was then introduced to Marilyn and was told there were eight in her family - Marilyn had appeared with a previous group.

I queried the reliability of the stories we had been hearing from



the children and Mrs H that everything was based upon fact but there was probably a certain amount of embroidery. I commented upon the apparent clear-eyed integrity of the boy who slept in such cramped conditions with pets on him. He was not a liar, she felt, but nor was he very bright and he might have difficulty in separating fact from fantasy in his muddled life.

Two girls showed me the pet jerboas. Mrs H said how much the animals seemed to enjoy being taken home by pupils in rotation - and the pupils too clamoured to have them.

'This is one of Sally's brothers', said Mrs H and was immediately corrected with a loud 'STEP-brother' from the ever-present Sally. 'My name's Geoff', he said. Mrs H went through the relationships of the Hyam family confirming who was 'step' and who was not. Half-brothers and half-sisters also came into the reckoning.

A boy said 'My dad comes to see us sometimes' and gave an emphatic 'No' (implying 'Of course not') when I asked if he brought presents. The boy added:-

'The dad what we've got now is not our real dad...  
and the mum she's got is her real mum and my step-mum.'

A girl offered:-

'My real dad is getting married to Auntie Joan and  
then she'll be my mum.'

Mrs H interjected 'and then you'll have two mums and two dads and what are you going to do about that?'

The girls went 'Hmmm!' quite happily and Mrs H pursued the matter with 'You are going to be lucky, aren't you?'

Someone in this family had stood on a garden fork and had to go to hospital.

A chubby little boy came across from the monopoly-type game and complained that the other players were throwing his money around. 'Pick it up, Matthew, please', called Mrs H, 'otherwise you'll have his brother after you.'

We walked along the corridor towards the Cookery Club of Mrs Q. Mrs H said that the clubs were spread across the years but there were a few arranged qualifications, e.g., there were not any fourth year pupils in her Indoor Games Club. On the other hand fourth year pupils had first claim for membership of the very popular Cookery Club as it was their last chance to have a go at this important activity - especially so for children of this neighbourhood. Thus Mrs Q's Cookery Club was fourth-year heavy.

This club's members prepare a variety of meals not requiring the use of an oven. Last week they prepared a picnic and took it out into the school grounds. Mrs Q said:-

'They have done Spanish omelettes and things. They provide the stuff from home. For the most part we find that...'

A girl rushed in from the Indoor Games Club and told Mrs H that Paul Evans was picking up the jerboas by their tails. Mrs H said:-

'Jenny, you can deal with him. Put them back in the cage.'

She then told me that Jennie was very much of a mother to seven boys. She has seven brothers and she is about the middle child of the family. She has grown up very quickly; she is very capable and 'if you give her something to do she will get it done. Her mother used to clean at the school and Jennie used to come in sometimes and help'.

I confirmed that the arrangement was to see Mrs Q after clubs when she would be free and then continued to wander between the Cookery Club and the Indoor Games Club.

In the former club they were making chocolate crunch out of biscuits and margarine and chocolate. Mrs Q never ceased to be amazed how children in her club managed to bring the ingredients from of their disorganized homes but there was seldom a child without the necessary materials.

21 May, 1976 - afternoon

Interviews at Meadowland C.P. School (continued)

Mrs J, teacher-in-charge of infants  
(Second interview)

(In Staff Room)

She was not very happy about my using a tape-recorder because she thought her northern accent came out 'funny'. We chatted about the use of tape-recorders and she soon forgot her objections. I assured her that I only used the recordings to make thorough notes - my note-writing not being very efficient - and that once transcribed the tapes had no further use.

Mrs J: Now I've got ten minutes. (Miss S was looking after her class)

Self: We had a chat in the Autumn Term - you hadn't been here long then, had you? - and you were telling me of the tremendous difference between this place and your Hertfordshire school... A few weeks have gone by since then; do you still feel that there is this enormous difference? Or have you forgotten?

Mrs J: Not really, because I am reminded of it so often. I am still in contact with teachers from the other school. It is fading I suppose: you know I can hardly believe that the children wrote so beautifully and their conversation was so good; I think I must exaggerate but then I know I haven't exaggerated. These children are very, very, very slow. I don't think - I've 36 in today - and I don't think there is any really average child that would have been average in Rickmansworth.

Self: So far as attainment goes, they are way behind?

Mrs J: Way behind.

Self: And this you feel is, and many people feel this, to do with their deprived state at home? I've just been in the clubs now talking with youngsters...

A child came in to wash up the tea cups and Mrs J responded with 'Out' then qualified this with 'Now I don't often say out but I'm busy...all right, Cindy, leave it and I'll see to it'.

Self: We had a couple of kids telling us about their..well, one a father and the other an uncle in gaol..and they were quite open about it, and how the family were shaping up and how (I think) there were eight living in this council house but when father, uncle and older brother come back there will be eleven in this house...

Mrs J: Out of 36 there are four that I know of whose father or the man that is living in the house is in prison, either for bashing up the next-door-neighbour or non-payment of...or, sort of telling fibs about the drawing of money, you know. And then there are fourteen out of the 36 that are from either...father's gone off or mother's gone off which is very high - including the four whose fathers are in prison - there's only one parent there or there's some funny mix-up, you know, in the social background - mixed marriages or no marriage or whatever...which is quite high really. I mean, even for here I would think.

Self: (I had started to interject in many places before and here I was successful in getting in) For Meadowland you mean?

Mrs J: And all those fourteen are very, very slow. Now, there's an example as well, you know, I gave out a lot of work yesterday afternoon that we had done this week, with tissue paper, paint, pastels, you know, cutting out and so on. And then I said 'Now hold them up' and I spotted odd ones and I said 'Oooh! Some people haven't got anything to take home'. There were seven and I said 'Everyone sit down except those who haven't got anything to take home...Stand up if you haven't got anything to take home'. And do you know seven were the readers, well there were two more, nine readers go to Mrs T (the remedial reading teacher for the infants' section). There were only two of her remedial group that had done something creative that I had given out. Now I know I have got to watch them and I've got to pin them down and say 'Now come on' because they're the ones that jolly need to cut and paint. But you can't always, you haven't always time to be aware of...I pointed that out to Mr Mo...I said just the sort...

Self: So, what do they want to do at school?

Mrs J: What do they do...they just wander around.

Self: They've got to be taught to read obviously, haven't they? This is an absolute must. But after that...They want to be taught..

Mrs J: All the mornings I tend to be very formal because I feel that they need it. But you see, another thing, they don't go to bed, on average, till, well the programmes they watch they tell the box...tells you this, so they don't waken up till...

Self: We're talking about five and six-year-olds now aren't we?

Mrs J: Mine are turning six - 5.9 to about 6.6. They go to bed far too late so they are dragged up in the morning without a wash or perhaps without breakfast; they don't really come to until about ten o'clock. In assembly they are yawning and stretching: not just odd ones, a lot of them, because I take assembly in the infants most...etc..and so you've lost an hour there. Then because they've gone to bed so late you might have playtime and they're all right, then they have milk or whatever, so they're on to you now but after dinner they've gone tired again.

Self: So they're short of sleep but what about food? Do you think they get enough to eat at home?

Mrs J: Well they get the wrong sort don't they? They don't get the fresh fruit and the vegetables.

Self: Lots are on free meals are they?

Mrs J: About a third I think.

Self: So they get a good stodgy - er - substantial meal...

Mrs J: They have good school dinners. She's (Miss E, Cook-Supervisor) pretty good...we've had salad twice this week.

Self: The meal I had was very good I thought.

Mrs J: Yes, I think she's very good.

Self: So, in that sense, they get enough to eat but you say it is not the right sort of balanced diet.

Mrs J: Well, they don't get chips any more because they're too dear but they live on crisps and pop and biscuits. This is another thing about this school, the free dinners come with ten pence for a packet of crisps and a packet of nuts: five more pence and they

would have a school dinner. It's no use educating...it's the parents who are at fault.

...well I don't get as depressed as I did when I first came; I've accepted it more and I feel that perhaps I can do a better job here...

Self: I suppose you now know more about their background?

Mrs J: Well I think sometimes you can know too much about their background.

Self: Do you talk to the parents? Do they come and see you..?

Mrs J: They do now I'm pleased to say. They didn't at first because of this northern accent. I think...well it's someone new and people don't like change, do they?

Self: But you were a long while in Hertfordshire - how long were you there?

Mrs J: Ten years...but I make frequent visits up north, my brothers and sisters are still in Lancashire. Yes, funnily enough the parents do come, and the parents of other infant classes, which is rather nice.

Self: But you are in charge of the whole infant section, aren't you?

Mrs J: Yes, but they don't really know that...the other teachers perhaps say 'Well go and have a word with Mrs J'. And I welcome them because I think it is important here to have a good relationship. I think that could be better...I'm just telling you and it's not a criticism: it's a helpful constructive sort of ...I think...but then you see some of them they think you're interfering if you're showing kindness or...they put up the barriers...

Self: Are they dressed fairly reasonably? Adequately, or...?

Mrs J: Yes, I would say adequately: the worst part of their dress is their shoes. They're in old tatty plimsolls - very often in the winter. You don't notice it so much now because it's dry... Reasonably clean...and turned out. But, as I say, the summer's here and it does not seem so important to be warm and dry.

Self: Do you come across cases of real neglect? Perhaps this is more a question for the social workers later on but have you come across any nasty cases that you care to mention?

Mrs J: Not really. We've got a boy here who is just recovering from scabies whose father is in a restaurant in town. Interesting? He's from Queensgate, I think. But the nurse says he's all right. There's one little boy whose father was killed last July and she's (presumably the boy's mother) had a...I think this is the third chap she's had she's got living with her now. He (the boy) was coming very dirty. He brings his money in nine p's and twelve p's - you see she can't get free dinners because she must be on... well she gets the widow's pension and so much money through social security. I was a bit concerned about him but you see there again the weather's better...

Self: He doesn't seem unduly distressed about it...?

Mrs J: He was at that time...but things are better a little bit for Julian. I was very concerned March and April because he was coming late; he was dirty, he was hungry: a real ragamuffin sort of...tired, very tired. But as if since Easter holiday...No, I wouldn't say there are any real...

Self: Are there, I suppose, medical things which are noticeable sometimes? You mentioned scabies, for example, was that found by the school?

Mrs J: That was found by the other school (i.e. Queensgate), we had a written report. We had the nurse the first day he was here..

Self: The nurse I suppose keeps an eye on them?

Mrs J: Oh yes, she has been twice, I suppose, in the last fortnight. You know we are very well supplied, we only need to ring up and someone will come. No, I don't think there is any...

Self: Yes, it's very well situated (i.e. the school). This is a thing that has hit me. You obviously have all the support you need here. Well the psychologists put me on to the place initially...I haven't really got on to social services yet but I want to do. What about education welfare? Do you meet the E.W.O. at all?

Mrs J: Not really.

Self: There must be one, I suppose, covering the area.

Mrs J: Yeah...I still find it very hard...but I've settled in my house, and all the family are settled and I feel lots happier about it really. You've to try and forget the..um..

Self: Well, I suppose there is not much you can do about the other thing...

Mrs J: Quite, you are here and this is it.

Self: How does this compare with other parts of the City? You live across in the Old Deansway Road, don't you?

Mrs J: Well Palace Way would be the..er..but I don't think even Palace Way would draw the same children that we had in Rickmansworth really, because there's quite a big housing estate there - not that I would...you know what I mean?

Self: A contrast with this area that I have found is Blair: do you know Blair School?

Mrs J: I know where Blair is and I can imagine.

Self: That is probably an incredibly good school in the sort of kid it draws: there's very little deprivation there at all. The Head is a very knowledgeable chap about the City.

Mrs J: Yet one of our staff here had a child at Blair and moved him - Mrs H - I don't know why...I know he was moved to Palace Way but I don't think that's fair.

Self: It would be near to your home would it?

Mrs J: Yes, but you can sometimes be too near, can't you?... These children say 'Can we come on Sunday and clean your car?' and 'Where do you live Miss?' and they say 'Oh! You live near Mr I' (the Head who is having a sabbatical year)...I'm a bit of a coward on this you see? I believe the teachers, cleaners and kitchen staff think he's a different kettle of fish altogether. It's going to be quite interesting.

Self: Some of the kids are calling me Mr I and I suppose that's the reason.

Mrs J: Oh they still talk about him. They've said 'Is Mr I your daddy?' He's a Welshman of course.

Self: Well that's great. There's a great deal there and there may be other things...

Mrs J: I think these children need to be talked to. They need to be listened to. They are not used to conversation at the table and still after a year...trying to sort them out. They are very often cuffed, you know what I mean. They are not deprived that much with their clothes and their food but they are deprived of sensible, not even intelligent - we don't even expect that - but just sensible. And yet they've got granny there. Some I can understand others I can't because a lot of them have grannies all around and granny often is the age...but perhaps these grannies aren't...perhaps these grannies aren't as old as I am. You see what I mean? We tend to think of granny as somebody quiet...

Self: Yes, you can have quite a swinging young granny who still likes to go and play at bingo or go to the pubs and so on...

Mrs J: Yes, and the children are missing out...

Self: The extended family isn't a thing around here, is it? As it would be up north, for example?

Mrs J: ...I think of a granny who will tell me a story at night and knit me a cardigan and listen to me and perhaps go to sleep with you. Well it's not like that...That is perhaps what these children...'cos obviously mum isn't going to do it and dad isn't going to do it...

Self: But from what you and others have been saying, even the nuclear family isn't very strong anyway...the whole thing often breaks down because of sort of shifting around?

Mrs J: Yes, for instance I came along Raven Avenue - I don't know who lives at number 38 - I was a bit late the other morning, later than usual, and I had to stop because you are very aware of children as you're driving up there and there was a chap about our age bashing a woman about thirty - this was at ten to nine - he was bashing her and laying in and I thought now what shall I do. Well what can you do? What should I do? I mean I drove on: but he was laying into her and she was screaming...

Self: Was anyone else around?

Mrs J: Nobody, they had all disappeared - just getting on. There was a big van outside. I did mean to say to Mrs N (School Secretary) 'Who lives at number 38?' but, you know, who intervenes? Or what happens? And then as I drove home...Oo there's a lot isn't there...there's a lot here of all sorts...

Self: Of course people don't know of this...very little reaches the local papers. You read the local papers, do you? ...You get the odd case in court but a lot is not known about. It really is an eye-opener and one of the things that interests me enormously. Miss S said they run out of words and they quickly get to blows...the kids as well.

Mrs J: The other afternoon I...a child had forgotten his plimsolls and I knew he had to take them home...and there was a young woman of about 23 who was very pregnant...and the foul language that she was shouting at somebody. Now I tend to be a bit of a hate...something deep down inside of me...it was really foul...horrible - and a young woman who was very pregnant you would think would be sitting relaxing; it was a lovely sunny day...oh dear.

Self: If you come from another background it is very hard...

Mrs J: It is very hard, isn't it, to adjust, and especially while you've got big classes and you are trying to get on with your job which is a totally...

Self: One wonders, you see, we do get shocked easily and thinking as I do preparing youngsters for teaching, how much of the other side should we show them? Do we leave them to find out? I teach the sociology of education...

Mrs J: Oh I tell my teenage daughters...mind you there are some things I do not tell them, but I do tell them that they can't expect...

Self: We have many at college who are quite shocked with the inner-city schools that they go to sometimes.

Mrs J: I've got two charming girls (students), Miss No and Miss Jo, I have twice a week from your...is it St Peter's College?

Self: Well I'm not at St Peter's, I'm at Avery Hill in London.

Mrs J: Why, of course...you live in the City. I have the two Tuesday morning and Wednesday afternoon and they are thoroughly enjoying it...They are first year...and they're nice girls, they are the right sort for teaching that I think...

Self: I examined at St Peter's for three years...they have all sorts of course, but they seem to attract quite a pleasant sort of youngster.

Mrs J: Some mothers must be quite proud of these two girls...I think they've been surprised here though...The children, you know...sometimes the language you see...they talk...and if they hear it at home they don't know what to say to teacher any different to what is said to them.

Self: Well Mr H (another Meadowland teacher) went to St Peter's and I was talking to him a couple of weeks ago and he was absolutely amazed when he came to this school and he did his teaching practice from St Peter's around here, you see. Meadowland was very different from any of the other schools in this area.

Mrs J: Well I've taught in London, I'm not a Rickmansworth teacher. I've taught in the back streets of Bolton...but there I've said they have their granny and the family and it's not...

Self: Well I see we are well over the agreed time and I must not keep you. This has been a fascinating chat and I look forward to our next meeting when we've both thought of more things to say. Very many thanks.



21 May, 1976 - afternoon

Interviews at Meadowland C.P. School (continued)

Mrs Q, teacher of a first-year class - juniors (Class 5)

After telling her of my research intentions and something of my background I asked a few details of her own background. She was very nervous and not at all keen for the tape-recorder to be used, but when I explained I was a very clumsy note-writer she said she supposed it would be all right.

Self: Where did you go to college?

Mrs Q: St Peter's.

Self: Oh, you are a local girl, eh? Were you there at the same time as Mr H?

Mrs Q seemed unsure and her reply was inaudible.

Self: I am trying to do an O.U. higher degree and my topic is 'Deprivation'. This is the sort of word we all use very easily: I'm not too sure how we all use it. Everyone seems to know what you mean when you talk about a deprived child but no-one seems to be prepared to elaborate...when I first came here from County Hall: I wrote there first to ask them if I could look at schools and things and talk to teachers and they said O.K. if the head doesn't mind...Mr Q (Divisional Educational Psychologist) gave me a sort of league table of what he thought were schools in order of deprivation around this area. He reckoned Meadowland was a bit special. Do you think it is?

Mrs Q: Yes, well I haven't had much experience in a great number of schools to compare it with, but yes it is.

Self: You've been at Meadowland some time have you?

Mrs Q: Two years now...and I taught at a school in Peterborough before and there were quite a lot of deprived children but they were different. There were differences...they were deprived in that they were hungry and things like that...And these children do not appear so hungry and materially deprived in some cases...

We had an interruption when a teacher came in to make herself a cup of tea.

Self: You have a high proportion of children taking free meals?

Mrs Q: About half the class I think.

Self: In Peterborough did they have a stronger family background?

Mrs Q: There seem to be a lot more broken families here.

Self: What about the sort of grandmas and things, were they around?

Mrs Q: They didn't seem to be.

Self: Was that a sort of industrial area? I suppose it is.

Mrs Q: Yes it was, it had got the diesel works. A lot of them worked in Pilkin's diesel factory...and Parkinsons...and other factories in which they worked.

Self: There was a lot of unemployment there was there?

Mrs Q: Not at that time but there is now they tell me.

Self: There is pretty high unemployment around here isn't there?

Mrs Q: Yes.

Self: And that has something to do with the free dinners of course, doesn't it?

Mrs Q: Well I suppose so though I think they are pretty good at wangling their free dinners...well from what Mrs N (School Secretary) has said, you know, she lives in the area and she knows a lot about some of them...

Self: Well I heard some incredible stories this afternoon in fact. The other club I was with earlier on before I came to see you - I heard of three children with brothers, fathers and uncles in jail, the children were rather boasting about it.

Mrs Q: ...two of my class with parents in prison last year... one of their sisters in my class this year...I don't know of anyone else, I think they've been in trouble with the law. A lot of the fathers have...what 'love', isn't it?...written across their hands when they've been in Borstal...Something tatooed anyway.

Self: I've seen that often but I didn't know it meant that.

Mrs Q: I have asked the children...and it seems that every child in the class had a father who had been tatooed. It seems a funny thing and it wouldn't occur in other areas. It seems to have some relevance somehow...it's a social thing.

Self: But you reckon, generally, they are not hungry?

Mrs Q: They don't get breakfast...they get the wrong sort of food...crisps...or their first meal is the crisps (i.e. at school break)...

Self: And they arrive at school pretty sleepy, as if they have been up a lot?

Mrs Q: Oh, yes...well the things they tell you that they've watched on television the night before suggests that they've been up very late.

Self: What, right up to the end of programmes?...Well, you've got first years, so what are they sevens or eights?

Mrs Q: Eight, yes...

Self: How fit are they? Are they away a lot?

Mrs Q: We have quite a lot of illness this year...in the Autumn Term or Winter Term...but they get colds and things...and they get sent to school when they are below par...when they should be kept at home...

Self: Do they; they just get pushed off?...This is an indication of a kind of maternal deprivation I suppose, isn't it?...or is it a kind of spartan upbringing?

Mrs Q: It isn't necessarily a case of parents being unsympathetic; they have to get out to work. We have had to take certain children home, they've been too ill to be at school.

Self: Have you? Would there be anyone at home when you go home like this?

Mrs Q: We phone up mother and she comes home from work, or father does it. Or there are others around...It is quite a close-knit community.

Self: Yes, close-knit in that sense; but is it in the strong family sense? It seems to me there is a lot of swapping around.. I just wondered whether that meant you could still have a close-knit family thing.

Mrs Q: No, I don't think they are close in the true sense of close and affectionately close, but they will look after each others families...They have sometimes got mothers in other parts of the City.

Self: Have you come across much violence...with adults - do they thump each other, or do the kids get very violent?

Mrs Q: Well I've got one...(hesitation)..Well, I haven't noticed though I think other teachers have noticed it. There are several well-known local men who have violent temperaments: there was one in a shop the other day...and cursing...next door to being a murderer.

Self: You mean he lived next door to a murderer?

Mrs Q: No, he is virtually a murderer himself...or they all say he was...he's an awful chappie...he blinded somebody and so on. I don't know whether it was true...but he is certainly disliked in the neighbourhood.

(I recounted the evidence of violence given by Mrs J during the previous interview that afternoon)

Self: What about language? This seems a fairly obvious area of deprivation.

Mrs Q: The language of the children do you mean?

Self: Yes, well generally, but the children in particular.

Mrs Q: Well the quality is impoverished...yet they talk a lot though it is often rubbish...they make sense to each other. But they have a very limited vocabulary...and they can't describe things.

Self: In that club you were obviously working very happily with them: it didn't stop them learning to cook anything, did it?

Mrs Q: Oh no. But when I got back to the classroom someone said something about fingers being cut off and why did he do it to himself. He didn't mean that, he meant 'how did it happen?' or 'how did he cut his finger?'. 'How did he do it to himself?', 'Why did he do it to himself?'. He couldn't get the right way round. He was suggesting that I had asked for volunteers to have their fingers cut off!...They can't construct the idea of asking a question; if you give them an answer and say 'what question have I asked?' they can't work it backwards...

Self: No-oo, this is a sort of lack of skill with words generally? But I suppose you are saying that this affects their thinking, they can't reason logically because of this lack of vocabulary?

Mrs Q: No. I've got one boy in my class particularly, James... blond-haired boy...comes from a very culturally deprived language background and he resorts really to thumping people because he cannot make himself understood to other people.

Self: Yes, Miss S mentioned that; people run out of words and because they run out of words they become physical.

Brief interruption while another teacher made herself a drink.

Self: ...and it's interesting the language thing.

Mrs Q: And they resort to shouting - I am sure they do in the classes, it gets a higher and higher pitched level of conversation because the only way they can get themselves across to somebody else is by shouting at them. And they're so used to talking above television I think: that's the explanation I put upon it, the reason that they do talk so loudly.

Self: They shout, and they probably get thumped a bit at home and they make their point by thumping other people presumably. Now reading, you've got a fair number in your class...30 odd - but how many go to Miss S out of that lot?

Mrs Q: 22, but the others are not particularly good. I've just done their reading ages and only one came up to what it should have been.

Self: You do your own testing, do you?

Mrs Q: Just the Short Burt Test.

Self: And Mr Q (Educational Psychologist) comes around and does the other tests. Does he do this fairly regularly?

Mrs Q: Certain children are recommended to him as being exceptionally bad - you could recommend the whole lot I suppose..

Self: But he generally comes to see individuals, does he, he doesn't test on a class basis?

Mrs Q: No. They did do some tests at the beginning of the year - first year tests in reading; but I think they were thinking of setting up a reading scheme or a reading workshop and so on in the vicinity. They were testing to see what the requirements were.

Self: Is there a reading centre in the City?

Mrs Q: They are just starting one.

Self: I think Mr X of Blair School mentioned something about that. But I think most districts have them, don't they? But you've got remedial people here, haven't you, in the sense that Miss S does this kind of thing, and then there's the teacher who helps with the infants - I understand she is leaving and going to St Saviour's School.

Mrs Q: Yes, we've been cut down on staff...Really it's utterly ridiculous, with the size of the classes and the problems of the children, that they should cut down...

Self: She has to go...she wants to go, does she?

Mrs Q: Well she's got to go because of the cutbacks in education.. the City's pretty poor as a local authority with education. I think I saw something a couple of years ago about the allocation of money to schools...

Self: Your City Council wasn't too good (before the reorganization) I understand, but of course it's part of the County now isn't it.. the division, perhaps?...Have you got any general impressions about these youngsters' use of spare time?

Mrs Q: ...most of them muck about over the fields, they kick a football around; quite a lot of them have got bikes and they'll play on those...

Self: Yes the bike one was interesting with some of those remedial groups. Lots had had bikes but not many had got serviceable ones...they had left them over the fields, or in

the garden, or behind the shed, or...it had got broken and...

Mrs Q: Yes, you see them around in the street; they seem to get through twice as many things as middle class children, I think it's not caring...I find that in the classroom they don't care about their belongings...

Self: And they don't get into the City much do they?

Mrs Q: They can't afford to...it's very costly (on the bus). Well I've got about two in my class who have any interest shown by the parents...who will take them anywhere and do things with them...and will help them and encourage them to make models of some plastic aircraft - and they're odd children because they don't fit in with the rest.

Self: It was interesting in Mrs H's club group where they were playing indoor games: only about a couple of them really play any games. Some play cards and know how to gamble and that sort of thing - not surprising maybe. I think it was Mr H who was saying that a trip to the swimming baths is a holiday. Going with the school was great but if they go with friends or parents or relatives this is virtually a day out.

Mrs Q: I know children sit outside the pub waiting for their parents.

Self: There isn't a pub on the estate, is there?

Mrs Q: No, they have to go to the Salem Road.

Self: That happens all over the place though, doesn't it? Do you think it happens a lot with these sort of kiddies?

Mrs Q: No, perhaps not a great deal, though I do know it happens. I think the mothers get stuck in the house and the fathers go out..

Self: That's a bit unusual in this day and age, isn't it? Was that true in Peterborough would you say?

Mrs Q: No, not very...they went to work (the women, I think) but they were not encouraged to make themselves look nice...

Self: What about holidays? Some of the kids seem to get away on holidays, do they tell you much about that sort of thing?

Mrs Q: Only the ones that are going somewhere jolly nice, like Spain or something. I think some of them imagine they are going to these places as well.

Self: That's interesting: I suppose it could be an index of deprivation this wanting to show off...

Mrs Q: Yes. But they do have a little holiday quite a lot of them - days out is the usual.

Self: What about the coast round here? It's only 14 miles one way and 7 miles the other.

Mrs Q: You hear of the occasional one who has been to Holysands Market - but probably not to the beach, not for the child's sake anyway.

Self: This is it, isn't it? Not being concerned about kiddies as kiddies, perhaps?

Mrs Q: I think they live for themselves...I don't think you should live entirely for the children, but...

Self: What has been coming through very strongly is this 'mis-application' of money; there is usually enough money coming into the house but somehow it is not being used 'properly'.

Mrs Q: Yes, well the mothers go to bingo...it's just mishandled; spent on cigarettes and drink and bingo and the wrong things. But they will give...when I first had my cookery club I thought I would be worried about making the children spend too much, really, the cost of it and then I found that if I said we'll have a little bit more...bring a few more expensive items they brought it all right so I did not worry any more. Today they brought chocolate, icing sugar...

Self: That was expensive...

Mrs Q: ...and biscuits, and nobody seemed to say that their mother had complained about what they had got to bring. Not at all. And I was very careful at first to try and limit it...

Self: There hasn't been a single complaint about that?

Mrs Q: Not as far as I'm concerned, no.

Self: But if a kiddie came without the ingredients is there a sort of school fund they could be helped with, or don't you do it that way?

Mrs Q: Well, I think they could be helped, yes.

Self: But no-one has needed to be yet?

Mrs Q: No.

Self: That's a pretty good record that isn't it, really?

Mrs Q: Yes. It's just because they say 'Mum, Mum, we've got cooking', you know pester, pester 'I want this', 'I want that' and Mum will get it to get them out of her way.

Self: And this is it, to keep them quiet...

Mrs Q: Yes, anything. I have had one or two and I think the reason they haven't brought the things is more forgetfulness and casual attitude rather than inability to provide the things...

Self: And lack of organization...not knowing which day it is?

Mrs Q: Yes. One boy said he had forgotten to bring his stuff today and the other child said he had brought half of the things, he'd brought the chocolate and the biscuits but not the other items and that was his own silly fault.

Self: What do you do about that? Do they get a share of someone else's, or...

Mrs Q: No, not really. They ought to have brought their own ingredients. He was able to make it today but his will be a bit hard (chuckle)...I just have to say 'I'm sorry, it's your fault, it's your club, you've got to remember the things; I haven't got the time to bother with you'. It'll probably teach them to remember on future occasions.

Self: Do you look around this area? (Bell rang) You don't live in this area do you?

Mrs Q: No, I live in Turner Holme which is just outside the City.

Self: But community life - I know they do play bingo around here. Have you come across any of their activities at all? Or have you heard of them through the kids?

Mrs Q: No I don't think I have...I know that Mr H runs a keep fit class for the women which is quite popular...It isn't an official evening class, they wouldn't make it official. The local authority weeded it out because they said there wouldn't be a demand in the area.

Self: And does he get paid for this?

Mrs Q: No it is quite voluntary. It's very good isn't it?

Self: Gosh. And a number of women come and do that?

Mrs Q: It is quite a good turn-out.

Self: That could be interesting, remembering what you said about women being kept at home...this a liberation movement almost, is it? (laughter)

Mrs Q: With the school there is a P.T.A.-type thing but very few people have anything to do with it...

Self: Ah, now that's called Friends of the School and they aren't the ordinary parents are they? They're people in the City generally who...

Mrs Q: There are parents...yes, most of them are parents. But it's very few of them...

Self: But they don't do much? They had a harvest festival didn't they?

Mrs Q: Yes, that was for them...or by them.

Self: Do you have any functions specially organized by those people?

Mrs Q: Yes, they have dances...Not at the school but they hire a hall of some sort. I don't know what the parents do here. I think they spend all their time watching television...

I filled in a pause recalling the excessive use of television in the houses of 'deprived' families in Stoke-on-Trent when I accompanied an E.W.O. on his rounds last August.

Mrs Q: (following up a point in my comment) Oh certainly, a smell of clothing we get...some children are worse than others...

Self: So, housebound and if they have got money they go out and spend it and if they haven't they stay at home and think of where they can get some more.

Mrs Q: ...the two children in my class that I think come from the really better homes are still emotionally disturbed and deprived...even if the mothers who you think have got more going for them...

Self: What sort of jobs do their parents do then?

Mrs Q: Well, postman, we've got a couple of postmen, and a policeman, and army people...

Self: Their children are pretty satisfactory though, surely?

Mrs Q: ...and dustmen - and, what else? One father works for the Post Office in a clerical capacity rather than as a postman...a mechanical type job and unskilled really, it must be unskilled...

Self: Is there a bakery nearby that employs local people?

Mrs Q: Yes, just down the road but I don't know of any in my class who (i.e. whose parents) work there...Odd-jobbing quite a lot of them do; scrap-dealing, merchant work and taxi-driving.

Self: So there aren't really any professional families who send their children here?

Mrs Q: I think we had two professional families in the school last year...I think there's probably one...this year...

Self: It must be quite hard to find a neighbourhood like this really.

Mrs Q: Yes.

Self: Miss S was saying that they had dug up some Roman remains not far from here and what did they find? Not a villa, or a fort, or anything glamorous like that, it was a rubbish dump...(laughter)

Mrs Q: Well the school is placed near a rubbish dump and the children get nicked stealing from it.

Self: Yes, but it is very pleasant really isn't it when you look around?

Mrs Q: Oh yes, it's beautiful surroundings. We're lucky in one sense that they've got the area to get rid of their aggressions and so on.

Self: I am wondering, quite honestly, how you get what is really a deprived area in the general meaning of the word...and they are lucky in having a school like this, but what can the school do about it - apart from 'eyes down', try and get them to read and write and that sort of thing?

Mrs Q: I don't know...I don't think you can influence their minds.. there is so much counteracting influence...

Self: Yes, and who is to say what is right and what is wrong? It is very difficult...

Mrs Q: And the children are jolly good about swearing because they don't...they go home and...everybody swears black and blue, you know because of the language the children use...

Self: So they are really bi-lingual in that sense?

Mrs Q: Yes, occasionally it comes out if they get...a temper or something like that, but really we've heard very little swearing.. and you hear them swearing when they are talking to each other but when they start talking to you they don't swear.

Self: Is there much stealing....in the school do you think...?

Mrs Q: It is difficult...I suppose it is stealing, yes, petty... taking pencils and crayons and so on.

Self: But you would expect that, wouldn't you?

Mrs Q: But if I left my purse lying around they wouldn't take that.

Self: But that was yours and they'd respect you...? (Recounted about the pen I lost with my first class of children)

Mrs Q: I don't think they would take my things. There is one girl who steals and annoys other children.

Self: But she's known about and does she admit it?

Mrs Q: No...it is a cry for help but I can't think what she needs helping with.

Self: No, I suppose she just wants attention. She doesn't seem deprived in any sense?



Mrs Q: No, not particularly. I spoke to her parents and they seemed to know what she was like and so on.

Self: They knew she took things?

Mrs Q: No, they didn't know she took things at all...she seemed to have her fair share of potential at home. She had less reason for stealing than other children...

Self: These kids, have they much in the way of ambition? Have you come across any who wanted to do perhaps unusual jobs?

Mrs Q: ...Bruce wants to be a detective, but apart from that, not really.

Self: And we can presume that they will go to sort of hum drum jobs. Of course, the first year juniors aren't likely (to have job ambitions)...are they? Perhaps when they get older...

Mrs Q: I don't think they have any imagination to think of what they are going to do.

Self: They just shrug their shoulders about which school they are going to afterwards, they don't worry about that too much do they?

Mrs Q: No they don't.

Self: They don't have much choice I suppose, there's little chance of selection...Is the City going to change?

Mrs Q: It's supposed to be going comprehensive.

Self: That's quite a good cross-section you have given me there.. Do you want to get back to your class..? I don't know, it's such a niggling sort of word (deprivation) and the more you play with it, as I have been doing for some months now, there are various shades of meaning that come through...

Mrs Q: ...the inspectors came round last year because we wanted to be made into an E.P.A. school and they had different measures ...and although I think we qualified on every count it still hasn't happened yet.

Self: Yes, it's the Plowden scale, isn't it: I think Mr Mo used these (measures)...

Mrs Q: Yes, things like turnover of staff, turnover of children, number of coloured children in the school...

Self: You've no coloured children in fact, have you?

Mrs Q: We've got three.

Self: But number of unemployed in the area, number of unskilled and semi-skilled workers, number in receipt of social security benefits, degree of mental illness or psychiatric disorders...

Mrs Q: Yes, there are lots of them...We don't know whether we have (qualified) or not or whether it's because of cutbacks in education but we just have not been allocated the staffing for what...

Self: I am sure you would be very eligible...

Mrs Q: We would have thought we were because...the children...not the premises...quite spacious.

Self: This is an interesting point because one of the ideas of positive discrimination was to make the resources better for the kids and if resources are already good...

Mrs Q: They're not though...the school and the buildings superb, as you say, but within the classroom it's not so special...

Self: You've got your basic desks and chairs.

Mrs Q: And it gets spoilt.

Self: Cookery doesn't look very special does it, the way you have to do that.

Mrs Q: No, I haven't got anything for that...I haven't got an oven...I try to avoid things that involve ovens. I think schools are going to be allowed one, junior schools...

Self: They just mix up the stuff and that's it - like fudge and things?

Mrs Q: Yes. But we do cook on heat though not in an oven. We do occasionally use the kitchen ovens.

Self: Well what sort of heat do you usually use?

Mrs Q: Well I've got a gas burner today. It's my own...But they need this sort of thing, they're going to have to do it; it's the sort of thing they're going to have to do. Well I daresay they can go home now and their parents aren't indoors and they are expected to get themselves a bit of something to eat. Well you know they are because when I said we would do sandwiches one week they all said 'We can do those anyway'...but they don't know what decent sandwiches are.

Self: ...some people feel very strongly about what's right and proper: obviously on the moral side you have scruples, but your point about sandwiches...what is a decent sandwich?...Miss S said that no one any more sits down to a proper meal...they slump in the lounge...superb suite, good telly, yet they eat on the knee... Who is to say it shouldn't be so? When you get down to who is being deprived of this and that...someone lays down the standards.

Mrs Q: Is it laziness?

Self: Maybe. I have always thought, personally, that it is terribly important to sit down, even to breakfast - we don't all agree in the family on that one. But kids come here and they sit down at lunch and you do it very well here too don't you?

Mrs Q: Yes. They are reluctant to eat anything they haven't seen before, very reluctant to test anything new out.

Self: This is a cultural thing virtually, isn't it?...They can be squeamish, got to be safe, e.g. bread and butter and jam and certain sorts of cakes.

Mrs Q: Yes.

Self: Are they easily shocked? Have you ever seen any of them shocked by anything you have done or said?

Mrs Q: No, not really...they're very broadminded. We have our sex education programmes this week...It's the first time the first years have done it but they glibly accepted it, they weren't shocked or anything...

Self: It's probably a good time to start it...

Mrs Q: Yes, they took it very naively and quite pleasantly really.

Self: This was on television, was it?

Mrs Q: Yes.

Self: There wouldn't be any objection here would there?  
Nobody has taken an interest in it?

Mrs Q: Oh yes. Three of my parents came to watch with the children.

Self: You told them it was going to happen?

Mrs Q: Yes and nobody objected and said 'My child can't go'.

Self: Of course, they could withdraw children presumably if they wanted to.

Mrs Q: Yes...and one parent kept their child at home to watch it with him...because she wanted to explain it to him properly and felt he might feel inhibited if he had to sit with others in school.

Self: That sounds a very caring sort of parent.

Mrs Q: Two parents: too possessive...that's one of the two 'better' parents...although she isn't better because she's possessive...

Self: You haven't got the Jehovah's Witness in your class?

Mrs Q: Yes, but that's not the one. This boy's father is president of the School's Friends...He's the Post Office worker - the clerical one...No, he (the boy) was kept at home because his mother thought that he would ask questions at home...he doesn't really know how to communicate very well with the children because he's kept away from them.

Self: But in what way? Is he withdrawn or...?

Mrs Q: No, not really...silly...daft is the word. He irritates them by his behaviour towards them...You wouldn't say he's as deprived as a lot of children and yet his deprivation is that he can't communicate particularly well with the other children who are of a different standard and a different class to him.

Self: You might say he is culturally deprived the wrong way on almost?

Mrs Q: Yes, he is. If you are middle class...and you send your children to this school it is completely wrong for those children, they can't cope with it. And you're doing your child no good if you send it here if you're a 'better' person - oh, I can't really say 'better person' (chuckle) - if your social...

Self: Social difference is the problem, I suppose.

Mrs Q: Yes. They're not accepted by the other children. They are different, I mean they know more, they've got more general knowledge...

Self: Do you think teachers should become more involved with them, or do you think they would not be accepted? (This related to the parents of children seen as deprived) If teachers went to local pubs and tried to mix...(mention of inner-city teachers)

Mrs Q: No I don't think they ought to, they have their own life to live.

Self: It can be embarrassing both ways I suppose, but...I'm just looking for ideas.

20 July, 1976

Morning

Interview at Meadowland Primary School

Mrs 'J' - teacher in charge of infants

We started by talking informally about salary payment at holiday times.

Self: Well, I've had one very short <sup>known</sup> interview with you and one very useful one, that was about half an hour it was great, I was wondering if this time I could run through..now some of this you may have heard before, I don't want it to be hard and fast in any sense, you take the conversation where you will, but I have written down some questions here..I did ask in a roundabout sort of a way 'are there any deprived children in your class?' and you gave me various sorts of answers but you really said a big 'yes' and then we went off in different sorts of ways in which they are deprived. You are getting used to the word now, it doesn't necessarily mean too much but it means different things to different people.

Mrs J.: I think that's why you can stay too long in a school like this. After a year I appreciate that there are people here that have been here too long because you accept..lower standards. Lower standards of teaching because the children aren't capable of too much. I think it also creeps into your own social into your own personal life.

Self: Yes, it can take on you and change you.

Mrs J.: Oh, yes, and you don't realize it is happening.

Self: Well even asking questions around it's changed my views in lots of ways I must say. Of the group that you are teaching now, thinking of this overall thing of being deprived, would you say the vast majority of them are in fact suffering from this thing in some form?

Mrs J.: Some form of deprivation, yes...You see not so much from money but then money isn't..then they've no books at all: I would say out of 37 perhaps only five or six, or maybe, seven have books at home.

Self: Really. You mean books worth having?

Mrs J.: I mean any sort of books. They might have a few newspapers, the sort with nude ladies in them. If ever I ask for newspapers to cover the tables..the selection! I have never in a year had a full-sized paper. You know what I mean?

Self: Yes, indeed I do.

Mrs J.: So this all reflects what is going on at home. And of course I didn't realize, I've only just realized this time, a lot of their parents can't read you know.

Self: Is that a fact?

know

Mrs J.: You send these letters home, you/notices about the school, and they can't read them.

Self: I wonder if they watch the television programme 'On the Move' on a Sunday?

Mrs J.: Well I think they just switch the television on and leave it until it goes off.

Self: There are obviously some you don't see as deprived in the group, I mean you could pick out one or two..

Mrs J.: Oh, yes, there is a very small number here who come from..a very small number. Normal mother and father, happy home, but a very small number - even so, Mr Clark, I don't think I have any children, even those from these normal, happy homes with intelligent parents.

Self: No. Lots can't read you say..

Mrs J.: So, what can you expect? It's taken me a year to realize this. The trips that even this handful of children who I would say are from healthy, normal, happy homes, they're not taken out and taken walks. All they do on Sunday if it's fine is to go to Herne Bay or...They're not stretched..The parents are just so..You see anyone who is anything

..you see we've one family, the Dalton family, they're saving like mad to buy a house because as soon as you get here and you realize what you are and what you are in the middle of, if they've anything at all they get out.

Self: Yes, I see what you mean.

Mrs J.: But to stick to and live in an area like this..As I say the children ~~have~~ <sup>there is</sup> no imagination on Sundays; <sup>and walks</sup> they just get put in the car and taken to the nearest bit of stoney sand, you know no..

Self: And you say teachers as well, it has an effect on them and the automatic thing is to want to be away if they have got anything about them.

Mrs J.: You know as a married woman my husband's job is more important, I didn't want to stay here at all; it's not the right attitude though and I did say to my husband if you're going to linger awfully long in the City, you know, then I just couldn't - another year, or at the maximum another two years, because I think my teaching standards will go down.

Self: That is a point, isn't it?

Mrs J.: I am sure they would because you are not being stretched, are you? They can't help it though.

Self: No-one is going to say 'It's not good enough', payment by results or anything like that? If you are in a high-flying junior school with great expectations that's different, isn't it?

Mrs J.: I mean it seeps right the way through, your great expectations. For instance, that's my painting dress but there is no point in putting on anything special. (It looked quite a presentable dress to me)

Self: But wouldn't that happen in any primary school though?

Mrs J.: Oh no, not in my two Hertfordshire schools. Well I like to be smart and fresh...So your personal standards are affected too...But you don't realize it is happening, it just creeps up on you.

Self: Now we've talked about the appearance of the children you see as deprived..they are not badly dressed but inappropriately dressed ~~some~~ <sup>of them</sup> quite often..Cleanliness and tidiness, are these things that you notice? Perhaps, thinking of these kids, is this something that singles them out and you say these kids look deprived in the sense that they are poorly turned out, they're not clean and tidy, or inappropriately dressed, is this an area you would look at?

Mrs J.: You see in assembly in the mornings some of them haven't had a wash, they've been dragged up to come to school: it's an experience to sit through infant assembly because they're dopey, their eyes are dull...and they don't hear a word you're saying. Really, I mean and I can say.. you do say at first when you're new here you say 'Come on, sit up', but there is no point of course they're so tired, they go to bed far too late. Now I know it's difficult to get any child to bed when it's hot.. and you make allowances for it.

Self: Now this is to do with another question here 'Do they get enough sleep?', I suppose you would say they don't?

Mrs J.: No, definitely not - of the right quality of sleep because some of them have dreadful rows in the house..it's a very disturbing going to bed, they might get a good thump to go to bed with and perhaps a good thump to get up with...Dirty faces, dirty hands, and their feet, Mr Clark. But it's the last thing with my children washing up and cleaning your teeth..and when you take music and movement up in this hall, some of the feet, oh dear!

Self: It's sad isn't it?

Mrs J.: It is sad. And then there's another thing, now this is absolute laziness on the parents' part, the boys are all having their heads shorn.. Haven't you noticed?

Self: It's nothing to do with Kojak?

Mrs J.: It's just that oh we'll get it all off. It'll last then for the

summer, you know. Won't have to brush and wash and comb and so on. I'm getting very hard aren't I? After a year in this place..

Self: These are the impressions that hit you quite honestly, it's fair enough. How about their health, are they particularly unhealthy? Do you see untreated physical defects around, do kids walk around with sores..?

Mrs J.: Oh, they're quite healthy. (interjected during first part of question) Oh, yes, we exclude impetigo, I've had three cases in this summer term. But we've a great liaison with the welfare services.. we had two children with nits in their hair and they were up the same day to go around to their parents. There is a great check at school although they have had their first dental check for three years and out of my 37 I had 28 letters for them to take home that they needed further attention..so that's very, very..

Self: Will parents take notice of this do you think?

Mrs J.: Quite a few came back but I would say half of that 28 did not return their forms..one way and another..which is much, much higher than the national average. I couldn't believe it. Of course the dental check isn't enough in this area if that is the first they've had in three years, is it?

Self: No.

Mrs J.: And if that's the result of it..

Self: It's sad, isn't it, because later on it's going to make..

Mrs J.: Oh, yes, and this pattern went fairly well through the school - although I had the biggest class. So, if they've sores, well I had another little boy in this class and he had enormous sores but I never got to the bottom of that because he was excluded and of course you never hear..

Self: This was something you never met in Hertfordshire?

Mrs J.: Oh no.

Self: And the dentist, equally well?

Mrs J.: There again, you see we used to give out just a few, perhaps four or five. I've even had them with no..and with regular dental checks as well.

Self: Well just running on then, perhaps we can cover these few points. A fair proportion of them do have free meals, we have talked about that before.

Mrs J.: There's a very high proportion. There's a lot of dodgers, but that's another story. A lot of them have no right to be on free dinners.

I had my eyes opened once again: we had Open Evening last Thursday and I met the dads, you know, and they only looked like boys and so on, but they are real dodgers, they really are - most of them. We're bringing up a generation of dodgers, aren't we? But that's political, isn't it?

Self: That's the impression you get from some papers isn't it. What about eating habits? They're good school dinners they have here, aren't they, and they're quite well supervised, and they're good meals..

Mrs J.: I don't know, I wouldn't have those standards in my home. But I try to say 'Use your knife and fork properly' and 'Sit up' and do it properly but I'm not too strict because I do infant and junior..

Self: Every day?

Mrs J.: Yes. I'm not too strict..

Self: Are they separate from the main part where the juniors eat?

Mrs J.: Well, they're later. I have about 86 infants in the hall: you know, food on the floor and they knock the drinks of water and all this. You see I was so shocked at first then you accept it. I try not to be too hard on them..and I don't ask for silence, I keep saying 'A little quieter' because I think perhaps it's a social time and they benefit from this. But their eating habits, they're ooh..you know, they're of a very low standard, really. Well I think.

Self: But as to diet. I suppose it is the only decent meal..

Mrs J.: We don't get too much waste actually. The supervisor is quite please

Yes, Miss E is the cook-supervisor and she has been here for a good many years and so have a good many of her staff. She's a good cook. She was the star pupil from the Tech. you know..

Self: Was she. You are lucky to have her, aren't you? I know the meal I had here was superb.

Mrs J.: The meals are lovely, but like Miss E says, she occasionally gives the children things that are purely good for them and they are not too fond of but you can't keep doing that you've got to give these children a certain amount of what they like. Salads never go down well, flitch cheese..the usual, well even the Hertfordshire children weren't too happy they'd rather have an easy dinner that they could just fork or spoon, I mean, children are all the same aren't they?

Self: Do you know about their diets at home? Do they tell you what they have? Breakfast, lunch - do they talk about what they eat at home very much?

Mrs J.: Well..it's chicken pie, fish fingers..because they will bring the boxes. And they're expensive these apple pies and chicken pies. As far as I can see there's no goodness in them, and they're expensive.

Self: The mums don't do much cooking in the old sense at all?

Mrs J.: No (emphatically). Not here at all.

Self: It seems sad because it is so cheap to make things..

Mrs J.: Quite. You see as a mother I am personally satisfied if I can get in the kitchen at week ends and in holidays.. I don't think they ever make jam or pies or cakes, it's all crisps you see..

Self: I was just wondering whether that cookery class you run here might be a great help, Mrs Q runs it doesn't she?

Mrs J.: But there again, what can she do, one afternoon..?...the children enjoy it and it's always over-subscribed. She's leaving too, did you know?

Self: Is she, I did not know that.

Mrs J.: Her husband's an architect and he's got a job elsewhere. Anyway, she'll be telling you.

Self: Now, behaviour we've talked about quite a lot. Would you say of the kids that are a nuisance, and there clearly are some, are these mainly the ones you would think of as deprived in one way or another?

Mrs J.: You get your odd one on a set course, but it is closely allied, one things allied to the other. I can think of odd examples where they aren't. Then you get to know their parents and you chat to them. I can always understand you know I can see why so-and-so is like he is.. Yes, I think these things are closely allied.

Self: Yes, and attitude to school work, that's all part of the same thing, isn't it? Or are there kids that work and you still find are a nuisance?

Mrs J.: No, because I think after all these years, that is with intelligent \* you get very bright boys who are very naughty boys.

Self: Yes, because they're bored?

Mrs J.: Quite, but that doesn't happen here..No, not at all. It's very <sup>often</sup> the boys are naughty, it's the same pattern, they go to bed too late, the home life, just the usuals, sort of mediocre, they get thumped at home so the only language they know is a thump at school and I don't like physical contact. It's not fair and this is not what I'm here for.

Self: No, that really leads on to the next question 'To what extent are their parents interested in how they get on?

Mrs J.: Not really. I was surprised I was told last Thursday at Open Evening 'Ah, isn't he nice', 'Oh, look...'. I had nothing intelligent but not even one sensible question about any child.

Self: No, nothing critical at all?

Mrs J.: Nothing critical, nothing constructive, nothing anything.

Self: This is the time you meet them is it, open evenings, they turn up do they?

Mrs J.: Yes, they just wander in. About three quarters of them did make the effort to come, so that's very good, but they're not really interested, just for a mooch round the school and a push around you know..There is no business-like approach to any of them, is there?

Self: You said that when you came from Hertfordshire you had to re-adjust your standards quite a bit. Is it hard to know where to start with ~~them~~ some of them? It's right back to basics do you find?

Mrs J.: You see, I think probably in Reception (Mrs J is to take the reception class in September) it will be stories and talking and then showing and helping, I can't think that there'll be much. There will be the beginnings of reading, well there's got to be what counting and the things which are very much pre-school or pre-pre-school..

Self: Yes, it's what you expect kiddies to have done at home before they get here..

Mrs J.: Yes, because here, you know, they're well turned five when they come. Now in my last school we took them in the year that they turned five so that you had some children that were four in the summer and we still took them because they were going to turn five in the school year.

Self: Is this policy, or does it just happen?

Mrs J.: I suppose it's just number of teachers, children: we're pretty full aren't we, over three hundred children, staff: there was talk of putting a nursery...I'll tell you what's happening, it's the ants that are flying.(At this point my ankles started to be nibbled; it was not ants but two persistent flies which I eventually killed)

Self: Interesting, now it was parents we were talking about there, wasn't it? Family networks; you have talked about grannies, etc., but there is not much sign of extended family networks, is there?

Mrs J.: No. Grans at bingo or at the pub.

Self: But they are around are they?

Mrs J.: Well, odd ones are around. But when you look at them they're my age, aren't they? The grans are even younger..they've got died hair..

Self: But they're not very interested in the kiddies as such?

Mrs J.: 'Ah, isn't he sweet'..

Self: In a soppy sort of way?

Mrs J.: Really, Mr Clark, I haven't met one mum or gran or dad that's been normal, or you can talk to normally..they just want them to come because they know where they are.

Self: The next thing was these particularly deprived kids, what do they do with themselves in the holiday-time?

Mrs J.: I think they just hang around..As I've told you before they don't even go into the City..they just flop about.

Self: Is there much for them in play space? You've got this school area..

Mrs J.: Well, they've got their own gardens. When I was a little girl we just had a little back yard and these children have all got lots of facilities, hot water and baths, haven't they? And they've all got a small garden..

Self: So they're not that badly off, but they just do not do creative things?

Mrs J.: Yes, they've got play areas over there and they're in striking reach of beautiful countryside.

Self: Aren't they just. Mr M said how he has occasionally taken walks across the country and that they like it but they never thought of doing it themselves.

Mrs J.: Yes, they just wander and muck about, filthy all the time.

Self: So there is play space. They aren't well off I suppose..

Mrs J.: They're all right.

Self: And the next area we've talked a lot about, there's a lot of quarrelling in this district amongst adults and among the children that stands out.



Mrs J.: Oh, yes. There's no loyalty with one another, they'll blame each other in the classroom..they blame each other and they fib to you. ..you never know when the children are telling the truth. It worries you really for the future..They get thumped at home, they tell you wild stories, they get it all wrong and mixed up, they thump..the vandalism here, I think we had another eleven windows go. And some of the windows that are now getting broken are the ones that have got glass mesh glass and ~~it takes~~ they're terribly expensive..

Self: And they take some breaking.

Mrs J.: There were eleven yesterday and eleven last week.

Self: At week-end does it happen? Of course there is no caretaker living on site, is there?

Mrs J.: No at night. No, there's nobody here. It's sad really..

Self: Summing up here. The kids are pretty ill-informed about the everyday facts of life, are they?

Mrs J.: Yes, they're not talked to or taken or shown or helped. It's anything I should imagine for a quiet..I should think, as mum sees it and it's the easy way out all the time.

Self: They probably learn a bit from telly?

Mrs J.: Yes, but not the right sort of stuff. If it's anything that slightly resembles education it gets switched off for something else presumably.

Self: Are you ever surprised by the way they reason? Do you ever find the most unlikely kids..work things out..

Mrs J.: Just occasionally.

Self: Yes, I've one or two examples lately, kids have shown that they have old heads on young shoulders. But this sort of life leads to this doesn't it in some ways..?

Mrs J.: You often find a diamond in a heap..There are odd children in my class and I've thought this one out, if they could be taken out and put somewhere else they've got possibilities, a sort of inner refinement that's very soon getting damped down. One or two..

Self: But as they get older I suppose older brothers and sisters operate on them and suppress any spark that's there perhaps?

Mrs J.: And there's so many kids in the families..

Self: Do the older brothers and sisters stay in this neighbourhood?

Mrs J.: They seem to, don't they? They move away but they come back.

Self: So in spite of all this there is a basic loyalty to the area?

Mrs J.: There must be something..It's pretty grim, that's how I see it.

Self: The very young ones obviously do not have the faintest idea of what they want to do when they go to work but their brothers and sisters, do you find they go shooting off and doing something you wouldn't expect? The young ones don't come and tell you? (University..as

Mrs J.: Oh, goodness gracious no. I've got one child exaggerated e.g. whose brother's in the Army and another one's brother is waiting to go in the Army.

Self: Well that's a nice escape in a sense, I suppose? If they pick up a skill.

Mrs J.: Yes, well one works in Halfords, one older brother, well he did but I think he's got the sack, you know I don't know what he's doing now. Oh no, you never get any educational surprises. Not since I came anyway

The tape finished at this point, just as morning break began and other members of staff came into the staff room.

20 July, 1976

Morning

Interview at Meadowland Primary School

Mrs 'T' - remedial infant teacher

The biting flies annoyed again while I was describing my research project.

Self: ..it was surprising to find an area like this in such a city..

Mrs T: Yes, it surprised me...

Self: How long have you been here?

Mrs T: What in the City, or in this school?

Self: Well, both.

Mrs T: I've been in the City nearly ten years..I've got one son and he was three when we came. When he got to the age of four I started doing half-time remedial work and he went into reception class, just for mornings only because he was itching to go to school, he was miserable at home because he had lost all his friends with moving, you see, and hadn't any here so he used to love that, in fact he used to cry when we went home at dinner time. And then, when he was five and old enough to start full time I then did a full year here. So that was, let's see, yes it must be nine years ago since I first came into this school and I did one year half time, one year full time and then I left, and I had a year off from teaching..altogether because I had got to the stage where I was so frustrated with it and I felt that one should either do teaching with one's heart in it or not at all. I couldn't do it half-heartedly: so I had a year at home doing nothing at all, just thinking really and it did me the world of good and then I went back into teaching - in prison with men for nearly three years.

Self: Did you? Gosh, how did you find that?

Mrs T: Very interesting; very good experience; very depressing - it's a very depressing environment.

Self: Hopelessness, I should think...

Mrs T: And the frustrating thing about that was that I did not have the men for long enough because it was a transit camp situation..and they got moved off: if they got a long sentence they were sent off to one of the London prisons usually. Well, they did up to four years in the City but I did not have very many men who stayed with me for more than about eight weeks and you would just get somebody started, you know, just beginning to see the light and then they were whisked away overnight..you didn't even know they were going usually.

Self: Do you see any sort of relationship between those chaps - they were all men? - and the very young kiddies?

Mrs T: Oh, absolutely..you can see it all developing all over again. I found what I thought was a common factor amongst those men and I think it is very much overlooked. Everybody emphasizes the role of a mother and underplays the role of a father and I have always maintained that the father's role is of equal importance to the mother's. And even the welfare staff used to talk about the quality of the mother; whether she was a good mother or a bad mother and do you know I found that was ..well not irrelevant because it is very important..but I found that especially amongst the young prisoners - in the young wing where they were up to the age of twenty-one, I used to see boys of about fifteen to twenty-one - and I found, almost without exception, that every one of them despised their fathers. And that was never talked about and

never really discussed and I have always said that if you can get a child to respect and look up to his father, if the father plays his role in the making of the moral standards they are much less likely to go astray. Mother is the provider of comfort, mother is the provider of food, clothes - you know, the instant comforts come from mother: the long-standing things, I think, come from father.

Self: Yes, this is very interesting.

Mrs T: ..I used to ask all the men when we had a little chat..because a lot of the lesson that I did was taken up with chatting. Not socializing but talking about the way they had gone astray, and they used to blame all sorts of things: they used to blame their environment, their lack of money, the keeping up with friends, friends leading them astray; you know, all the usual things. But then you asked them about their father and they would say 'Oh, he was no good..all he ever did was belt me'.. They never had a good opinion of their own fathers and I am sure that is important..

Self: Interesting..

Mrs T: And I can see it here..I can see it with those children. Mother's the one to run to, to hold her hand. Mummy's the one who sees to them at the school door and cries when they start school and dad does not figure very largely in their lives except to rebuke them, or, well I don't know I think the children who have got a friendly father, a father who will take them out and do things with them and a father that really makes conversation with them and doesn't just tell them off; those children are more balanced children.

Self: Yes, this is a really interesting thought actually: it's an obvious one almost but it is not one people talk about really, is it?

Mrs T: No, I think it's very much underplayed, the role of the father.

Self: Well, you have, like Miss S, children drawn from other infant classes..How many other classes are there? Three or two?

Mrs T: Well, I don't touch reception class because that's too young and very often they're only in reception class for a term anyway and then shunted up, but the main class that I withdraw from is the older of the two top infant classes..Miss E, the top infant class, and Miss U, the next stage; although some of Miss U's are as old as Miss E's but have been kept down because they're not such..(voice tailed off)

Self: Mrs J, which class does she take then?

Mrs T: Well she's the next stage down again.

Self: So there are four infant classes then?

Mrs T: There are four; yes, reception and three others.

Self: Now, how would they be selected to come to your class..Have they done tests, or is it just..?

Mrs T: No, it's not done through testing; because we think they're a bit young for testing anyway it's done through the teacher's own experience of a child. I go to the class teacher and say 'Who do you think your..you know, worst dozen or so..' and then, sometimes we change over, we find a boy whose not..

A further interruption from biting flies.

Self: So the Educational Psychologist isn't interested until they get into the Junior School, is he?

Mrs T: Now his new idea is that the younger you select the child for extra reading the better. Otherwise, the earlier you tackle the problem the less likely it is that the problem will persist - which I think is true.

Self: I think..the evidence of Head Start is that early, or even pre-school, stuff is great so long as it is followed on once you're at school; and Head Start has not always been..

Mrs T.: No, that's true.

Self: Well, anyway, they're pulled out and you have them and it is reading, isn't it, you do with them?

Mrs T: It is reading - I do a lot of oral work with them..

Self: Reading readiness, in other words?

Mrs T: Yes, I do a lot of phonetic work; we do a lot of sounding out. And we do a lot of..well, they're colouring in sort of Puffa Pipe, you know, pictures in the early stages and then they bring it to me and tell me what it is when they have coloured it. You know, 'This is Puffa Pipe' and so on: then I follow that on with other comprehension cards which I've made myself and whilst they're writing and colouring and drawing and whatnot I'm hearing them read individually so that every child, each time he comes to me, gets some individual attention. It's a bit of a cram actually because I have them for an hour but I have a dozen in some groups and to fit in each one for sort of five minutes individual work is all you can do - twelve into sixty minutes..

Self: And you have twelve for an hour..It is a big group, isn't it?

Mrs T: Which is too many, but then you see we have so many slow learning children. I could easily..

A further interruption while I managed to kill one of the flies which were biting us.

Mrs T: Well the difficulty is fitting them in in sufficient numbers; you see, I could quite easily do this work on a full-time basis and still not see everyone..We could do with two or three remedial teachers, you know. Well, we could work with two in the junior school and two in the infant school quite happily, I'm sure we could.

Self: ..it has been suggested to me by my supervisor that remedial teaching in the infant school I might find to be much more specific to the child than in the junior school. I think in the junior school there is a bit of a tendency, although reading scores are there, for kids to come that are a bit of a nuisance, shall we say..

Mrs T: That's right.

Self: But this wouldn't be true in the infant school perhaps, would it? Or do you think it would?

Mrs T: Well, I would never take a child just because he was a pest, to get him out of the teacher's hair.

Self: No, not just because, but, er..

Mrs T: But those sort of children sometimes <sup>need</sup> have more concentration, you see don't they? You know, they've got butterfly minds; they might be quite bright in many ways. They might be brighter than the rest of the group but don't apply themselves.

Self: There are bright kids who can't read, I am sure, some of those I've seen around here: they seem to be quite bright in their general observation and the way they talk to you and so on but they've got reading scores perhaps two years behind their chronological age..Now what about 'deprivation'? Have you thought about such a word? It means so many different things to different people..in the <sup>popular</sup> literature on this e.g., 'Born to Fail' and 'Unequal Britain' - do you feel...?

Mrs T: I think deprivation, as you say, can mean a number of things :

I think the most serious deprivation is a deprivation of love, isn't it?

Self: Yes, maternal and paternal deprivation?

Mrs T: I don't think coming to school in a dirty state, or in poor clothes, or living in a very poor area and having little money: I don't think that deprivation <sup>necessarily</sup> stays with the child, or marks the child, I think they can rise above that kind of deprivation.

Self: As long as there is care shown at home?

Mrs T: As long as there is understanding.

Self: Whoever it might be? Not necessarily a mother - it could be anybody, as long as there's caring?

Mrs T: It could be anybody as long as it is somebody who is really concerned about the child...To give the child an emotional stability. But, I mean, no amount of good quality clothing or toys or trips out to the seaside - that's all very nice; it's nice if you can have everything, but the most important thing is emotional stability. I think the child really needs consistency; I think what they really need to learn in the early stages is 'yes' means 'yes', a promise is a promise; and 'no' means 'no' because when you say.. I mean I can see it in the classroom there in M's room in a very short..you know, in that ten minutes or so when I was in there, the child who is not used to being made to do what he is told to do and then gets into trouble because of it..because mother has not been consistent. She might whack him in the end but he has disobeyed about six times before they get to that stage and it leads him to believe that, you know, it's worth trying it on.

Self: Now I'm just wondering whether there is any link between a kid that just does not have this sort of loving, or care, this continuity if you like, and poverty..Would it be a fact that people who don't exercise this firm control and care are also, perhaps, rather 'tatty' people who haven't got much money and have a disorganized home. Is there any link there, do you think?

Mrs T: I don't think it's the lack of money: the two things often do appear to go together but I don't think it is the lack of money, I think it's coping ability. A mother can have a large family and very little money and still cope very well and have stable children. But I think, providing the mother has emotional stability, you see that's the important thing; if she's frustrated either through the lack of money or because the husband's drinking it or knocking her about, or she's pregnant every year, then it effects her emotions which in turn she takes out in some way on the children. But the lack of money on its own does not make for a poor upbringing.

Self: ..The sort of painstaking woman who will darn carefully and turn kids out well regardless of lack of money, this is the old sort of image you used to get but you don't see much of that these days, do you?

Mrs T: No, I suppose you don't, I think that's a dying breed.

Self: Because it's so cheap to replace stuff perhaps now, or is it? Do people just replace rather than mend?

Mrs T: Well, usually, yes.

Self: Let's put this as a question. Are there any kids that you've come across who are obviously from loving homes and have this sort of care you talk about but, even so, are turned out atrociously, they are really scruffy and perhaps even unclean?

Mrs T: Yes, oh yes there are such children .

Self: So it really can happen, that's an interesting link and I think it's perhaps one of the most crucial points I've got so far at this school.

There are kids that are not deprived in this emotional, caring sense..

Mrs T: I think they are few and far between. You don't see many children like that but there are children.

Self: Yes, I think I have. That's an interesting one isn't it? But on to parents..do you meet parents very much here, or do they come and see you a lot? But they wouldn't, would they, because you are not a class teacher in fact, are you?

Mrs T: No, although what I did this year and last year on open evening when the parents had appointments, I went into Miss U's room because I see more of her children than the others, and when a parent talked to her about the child's reading she would then refer them to me and say 'Well, your child goes to Mrs T for extra reading' and then I took over and talked to them about the reading side of things.

Self: And so you don't meet them in that sense normally?

Mrs T: I don't very much, no.

Self: You're going to St Saviour's are you this next term, do you live that side?

Mrs T: Yes but I am not going because of that.

Self: I'm just wondering how well you knew this area. You've been in this district quite some time, that is in the City.

Mrs T: I've done a lot of supply work, yes, I've moved around the schools a bit. Yes, I had a term at the Gorton (Sec Mod) in the mornings; I did the remedial work with the first and the second year and quite a few of those children had been through this school..

Self..: You've never been to one of the local bingoes or anything like that?

Mrs T: No.

Self: You look at the houses like I do going past. When term is finished I going to do something with the E.W.Os and get into the area a bit that way I think because it will be very interesting to me..Seeing them at the school, which is a very pleasant school, don't you think this is a nicely situated school really and it doesn't give you the impression of being a school servicing a deprived neighbourhood.

Mrs T: No, it doesn't look like it.

Self: Some of the stories I've heard from kids have been quite incredible. One wonders how true they are some of them. Have you any evidence of the kids' backgrounds at all? They talk to you a lot presumably..about families and things..

Mrs T: Well you see the children tell you certain things which one should initially take with a pinch of salt, but when the Headmaster confirms it - you see he has his sources of information, he's got his own welfare workers. You see I don't take anything for fact until the Headmaster says 'Oh yes, it is so'. The mother has gone off or she has married again or..you know.. But certainly there are people in this area in the City that I never expected to find down here, because I came down from Bradford, near Bradford, and I had worked in a slum area there in the city.

Self: That was very difficult?

Mrs T: Unbelievable. Because I had started..brought up in Scunthorpe

which is a new, newish steel town, very much a one-class town: it's working class but not the slummy..

Self: Skilled working class?

Mrs T: Yes, yes, it's very unusual really, you see, and until I had left Scunthorpe I suppose I hadn't thought..

Self: But Bradford had urban squalor?

Mrs T: Well they had..you see it was an inner city school and it was mixed racially and the whites who were still in this area were what you would call the non-coping variety and every child was from a problem family.

Self: Yes, I've heard a bit about Bradford; one of my friends at College taught up there in a middle school until quite recently. He tells many stories..

Mrs T: You know I went from one type of working class to another type of working class which I hadn't appreciated the difference until then; that was when I was first married. And then I moved to a school a little nearer the outskirts and things were a bit better there because a lot of them were slum clearance families who had improved themselves a bit or moved into a better council estate area, more modern housing, and that was a bit better and then, as I say, when I came down here I thought I was coming to something which was virtually all middle class or nearly middle class.

Self: Yes, that's the impression people get..go down South and.. In the early stages of my enquiries people could not believe that I would find serious deprivation in this City area. But Mrs J is very interesting in that she was, as you know, in Hertfordshire and one would think that our rural area and that county would have similarities, but not a bit of it she said.

Mrs T: Well it depends which part, you see; I think to be honest you would find that any town or city, if you looked for it, you could find such an area.

Self: Yes, I think you are right.

Mrs T: Certainly any city you could and I think any town, even a small town.

Self: I suppose that's true, you know York and Lincoln and places like that you could probably..

Mrs T: I'm sure you could.

Self: But you see the area I thought I would look at initially was New Lodge because that is an old part of the town and it would have the characteristics that I would expect to find and you could find similar places in Lincoln and York I am quite sure. But moving a bit out as we are here I think it's surprising, you know, that you find things..

Mrs T: Well it's simply that housing policy is that..

Self: Yes, I believe so, Mr H was very interesting on this he had some strong ideas about the policy of the local council. This apparently is where people who won't pay rent or have been unsatisfactory in various places get pushed. Did you know that?

Mrs T: Yes, it is definite policy: which is all very well..I think it has advantages to it, that system, in that you leave other council estates relatively unbothered, don't you? At least the other people

paying council rents..the theory of it is that at least they don't have the nuisances.

Self: Yes, you've just got your first gypsies here I believe now.

Mrs T: Yes, we have.

Self: Have you met any in your group?

Mrs T: Yes..well I think they're gypsies. Yes, I haven't seen much of them yet. They're usually very nice.

Self: Now you're going to St Saviour's; what will be the initial difference do you think you will find at St Saviour's.

Mrs T: Well, I'm doing remedial work there too but with first year juniors. I can't really say because they are building such a big estate there aren't they..but it's probably much more of a mixture at that school than it used to be. It used to be very middle class.

Self: You haven't the mixture here, that's the thing that so many teachers have told me..it's not all one..well, these two girls here are charming, aren't they?

Mrs T: Very nice. Yes, we get the odd ones who are..

Self: Well, that's fine for an initial chat. Were there any other thoughts you wanted to mention. There are all sorts of detailed questions on deprivation here..were there any other glaring things about deprivation which you wanted to say?

Mrs T: Well, they're all so obvious I think, aren't they?

Self: They are, yes, like clothing and food and sleep and what they do with their spare time and these sorts of things.

Mrs T: I mean to me anyway, because I'm mostly concerned with reading which is an extension of language development, it's a lack of conversation: the complete inability to put their thoughts into words. They give you half a sentence...This is what makes it such hard work you see. And quite a surprising number of children have speech defects: now I've asked the speech therapists and they can't tell how much of this is due to laziness or lack of correction at home. You know if you start them off as babies speaking more clearly..but it's hard to say isn't it what caused it? But it's amazing how many have difficulties with doing the single sounds because of that, even the single sounds you see. A little girl who she started to analyse her words she said 'yeh' for 'ye!' (i.e., 'yeyow' for 'yellow').

Self: Do you think that speech training as such is an important thing that could overcome this sort of deprivation?

Mrs T: Nothing overcomes deprivation.

Self: No, but this is language deprivation we are talking about really, aren't we? This lack of a language to come to school with - or speech rather than language. They aren't quite the same are they? But this little girl you are speaking of: would it help if someone spent a long time helping her to pronounce words?

Mrs T: I've tried: that's what I'm training her to do..Mind you we do send children to speech therapy. And we have contacts there.. but it's the same as everything else, isn't it, the best place for this is in the home.

There were interruptions as one of the girls made the staff coffee but Mrs T carried on talking about the strangeness of the speech of some of the children. She said that she had not studied language as



such but she was interested in it in the everyday contact sense and I agreed on its prime importance as far as educational studies were concerned.

The interview finished as the discussion widened with the arrival of other teachers for the break period. There was a general feeling of outrage that Meadowland School, with all its literacy problems, could lose its remedial teacher in the infants' section so that St Saviour's, in a much more privileged neighbourhood, could gain such a valuable member of staff.

To  
T/R 5 Side (a)

20 July, 1976

Morning

Interview at Meadowland Primary School

Mrs 'Q' - first year juniors and Cookery Club.

The interview opened with a discussion about Mrs Q's husband and his recent qualification as an architect. He had obtained a job in Peterborough and they were to set up home in that town, where Mrs Q used to teach, but Mrs Q was not going to resign her post at Meadowland: she was to stay in lodgings and continue her work for the next term. We talked about the area and I recounted how the Director of Education of Cambridgeshire had told me that the deprivation thereabouts really happened in Peterborough.

Self: I hadn't thought of Peterborough as being in Cambridge.

Mrs Q: It is now, it has only just gone over to that county... It is a very nice area really, I would not have thought there were many deprived schools: although I suppose some village schools might not have all that they should have.

Self: I suppose it is rural deprivation, which is a different thing, isn't it? Well, last time I was chatting to you we had a very good run around, we covered a lot of ground... This time I've got some fairly specific questions... perhaps they're almost too specific, naive in fact. Please answer by going 'round the houses' if you like. I did ask... in a round-about way last time how many deprived kids there were in your class - there are deprived children in your class you reckon, don't you?

Mrs Q: Oh, yes.

Self: Now would it be a lot? Would it be half the class? Or, would it be just a few..?

Mrs Q: No, it would be the majority... Yes, there's something wrong with every family... Well, you don't realize it at first, but then you discover certain, little things about each family and you realize... oh, that's why they are here... really.

Self: You mean, why they live in this area?

Mrs Q: Yes, why they live in this area. You think to yourself that they're a nice little family and so on and then something crops up and you find out some little gem of information and you think well that's why they're here.

Self: So, really, if everyone here is like this then you haven't got any group to compare them with - although some are more (deprived) than others, I suppose?

Mrs Q: Some are more obviously deprived, yes.

Self: We have talked about specific ways in which they show up as being deprived and there is a whole list of things, some of them I suggest here. Appearance, for example, dressed suitably for the time of the year; cleanliness and tidiness; it's this sort of area. ...is this something that hits you straight away?

Mrs Q: Well, when I first came I thought they were better dressed than the children I had in Peterborough..but now you know them better

you can see their clothes come from jumble sales..and hand-me-downs, and all this sort of thing. And they aren't appropriately dressed; their underwear isn't clean and so on.

Self: Inadequate clothing shows in winter-time when it's cold, but what about this very hot weather we've had recently?

Mrs Q: They've got more suitable clothing for the summer weather, they've got cotton dresses..no they don't wear very much.

Self: T- shirts and shorts, I suppose..

Mrs Q: One little boy I noticed yesterday had got a very laddered T-shirt, a great big ladder right across it and you thought that if he was yours you wouldn't send him to school in such a state.

Self: They have to wear something on top though, I suppose, don't they?

Mrs Q: Oh, yes, we insist they wear something on top....Well you notice that they go home and don't have baths and come to school with very dirty necks..and they're like that the next day.

Self: Of course everyone perspires this weather, but does the stench from the 'deprived' kids register..?

Mrs Q: Well I don't notice it, but other people do..I suppose you get used to it. Yes, one or two children stick out from the others as being particularly smelly...

Self: Are any of them particularly unhealthy? How about untreated physical defects, the minor ones..?

Mrs Q: No..though you do notice children have things lingering which you think had ought to have been treated at the doctor's and so on.. They seem to treat themselves by pricking their own blisters and all this sort of thing...

Self: They don't run to the doctor's I suppose?

Mrs Q: Oh, they do. Mothers do run to the doctor's much too quickly. Just the slightest sign of a cold or something and then they're off to the doctors..but then on other occasions they let things hang on too long.

Self: There is conflicting evidence on this one, isn't there? The Newsons who did the Nottingham study years ago found that..the children of the lower working class were less inhibited, they didn't worry about minor things, their physical ailments, in the same way as the more carefully brought up middle class kids did. But I get your point, they do go to the doctor's...

Mrs Q: They seem to go to two extremes, as you say, they either rush them off to the doctor's when a little home medication would help or else they let the things go on for too long. If the mother goes out to work and cannot be bothered to take them to the doctors then they're likely to keep them off school, or send them to school when the child obviously needs to be kept at home and does need some attention...

Self: You've had some quite ill kids come to school, have you?

Mrs Q: Well, children that I wouldn't have sent to school, in fact we've sent them home because they're obviously too mopey and ill to work.

Self: Do you take their temperature, or anything like that?

Mrs Q: Well, I don't do it; Mrs N may do it, but, er, well they go  
(School Secretary)  
to sleep on you, you know, and things like that; they're really mopey  
and miserable..but you can tell by the child whether they are putting it  
on or not, usually.

Self: The next question is a general one about sleep...Do you think  
they get enough sleep?

Mrs Q: Well, from what they say, no. The way they come to school and  
say 'I watched something that was on at 11.30 last night on the television'  
and in this weather, the very hot weather, they certainly haven't had  
enough sleep but then I mean everybody finds it difficult to sleep when  
it's so hot.

Self: I think Mrs J made a point when I was asking about this. She said  
that often, particularly in hot weather, the parents..row into the  
night, they get short-tempered with each other and this can disturb the  
little ones, I think.

Mrs Q: And I think parents go out to have a drink on hot evenings as  
well and come home rather...

Self: Full of the joys of spring, yes. Free meals we certainly talked about.  
Most of the kids in your class have free meals?

Mrs Q: I think it's a good half, or nearly half I should think, certainly.

Self: Eating habits? They eat very well in school, don't they, because  
you are so very well organised here..

Mrs Q laughed and said: I don't know, they don't have very adequate  
meals at school...Well one of them said to me it's Colditz rations  
today (more laughter).

Self: Is it because it's not very exciting to them..?

Mrs Q: No I think it's because they honestly haven't had enough on  
some days.

Self: I should say the meal I had here was very good...

Mrs Q: Yes, it varies, but some days it is inadequate.

Self: If they have salad they wouldn't feel they had had very much perhaps..

Mrs Q: No they don't.

(most of them)

Self: What about their diet outside, do you think they/get enough? You  
don't get poor little wretches who look like something off the posters  
by Oxfam.

Mrs Q: Well some of them are rather thin and under-nourished looking and  
pale, and their diet - they don't have breakfast and then they come to  
school and have crisps and this sort of thing.

Self: The evidence I've got on breakfasts is incredible; I've got Tizer  
and buns and jelly..

Mrs Q: Yes, when I come to school at about eight which is when the shop opens down at the bottom you see lots and lots of children going out to get the bread and coming back with sweets at the same time; obviously that's their little job in the morning and that's their breakfast going back home - then cornflakes perhaps, if they're lucky, and Ricicles and things...but I should <sup>think</sup> very few have a cooked breakfast any time of year: one in your class..one lucky one, or something like that..

Self: That goes right across the board I suppose, doesn't it, the number who have cooked breakfasts: I don't suppose many families do. Who was it in one of the groups I was talking to, I think it was Mrs H's group - a kid said he had to have grapefruit for breakfast and all those around him said 'ugh' (or similar noises of non-approval). Well now, behaviour...would you see any connection between poor behaviour and kids you see as particularly deprived, is this something which stands out?

Mrs Q: Yes, some with poor backgrounds are loud and others are more withdrawn, it just depends..They do have behaviour problems, they are difficult some of them.

Self: Is there a danger...Sorry.

Mrs Q: It depends really what goes on at home really: some of the children perhaps that are hit a lot at home are very subdued at school or it might have the reverse effect and make them loud and..

Self: Yes, I suppose they might be quiet and then suddenly 'boil over' as it were. There is a danger, I suppose throughout the country, that a kiddie who is suffering all sorts of deprivation can be quiet and withdrawn and not be noticed..which I'm sure used to happen more than it does today, I mean when people weren't so fussed about these things. I've often <sup>thought</sup> about this because teachers feel quite strongly about the behaviour of kids, quite obviously..

Mrs Q: Well, their behaviour in that they are rude and so on, obviously is something which comes from the home because they aren't taught politeness and that sort of thing...They aren't polite quite often: I mean there are very few 'thank you's' and 'pleases' and all this sort of thing.

Self: Yes, behaviour is a term..which covers so many things..

Mrs Q: And their cheekiness and so on. You could imagine them having a similar conversation ~~at home, and might be~~ with a cocky sort of attitude with their parents which might be all right at home and might be a laugh at home but at school, you know, it's not wanted.

Self: It's interesting on this one, the Social Adjustment Tests that I've mentioned before - the ones which Mike Q (Educational Psychologist) uses on some of these kiddies: you know, how they greet teacher in the morning - ignore teacher, mumble..I think there are four points on the scale. This is a strange one, isn't it, but it will depend so much on what is normally expected at home, I suppose, but I don't know really if it tells us very much. You see politeness is a funny one isn't it.. (example given of the refusal of some sociology research students who had refused to stand for Latin grace at a Cambridge college in a recent B.S.A. summer school)  
It is an interesting point to take right across the board what is rude and what is not.

with-

Mrs Q: It's just a case of what is accepted/in the circumstances, isn't

it, what is acceptable at home and what is acceptable at school and the mass of the children, I suppose, manage to adjust quite well. I mean they won't swear in school..but you know jolly well that once they get home..they're going to swear away. And when you're not listening they'll swear.

Self: Well I suppose really the absolutes of behaviour are to do with violence and destroying property and this sort of thing, aren't they?

Mrs Q: Well, they don't have very good respect for property in the classroom, really; they're very, very poor at looking after belongings. You know, the number of little things that get broken and mis-used is amazing. The turnover of equipment must be greater than at other schools for that reason, because they are poor at looking after things.

Self: Attitude to school work, we've certainly covered this before. You've got some, haven't you, who really are keen to get to school and get on with their work? Would you say it is true of most of the kiddies, or not?

Mrs Q: Yes, I think they probably are keen to do what they do..Well, they fall into two categories: the majority I would say, yes, they were willing to learn and industrious, really, but then there are the minority of everybody's class that are sullen and won't make any effort at all, you have to really push them the whole time to get anything done.

Self: Does this relate at all to the parents' interests do you think? A few of the parents are presumably interested in their kids' work..

Mrs Q: Yes, it does - but I don't know, I've got one boy in my class whose certainly got keen parents but you know he needs a good push the whole time to get him doing anything.

Self: Yes, parents being interested might even have the opposite effect, mightn't it?

Mrs Q: Yes, there are some anxious parents.

Self: Now you've got your own class; have you met many of the parents? They come to parents' evenings-don't they?

Mrs Q: We had parents' evening last week and I had fourteen out of thirty-seven.

Self: That's not very high, really, is it?

Mrs Q: Not really. And those were the parents you didn't want to see really anyway. I suppose they were the keener parents and the children were, well, the better children.

Self: Is this pretty normal...?

Mrs Q: Yes; well one parent I expected to come and I asked her little boy was she coming. 'No she's got to stay at home and look after the new dog'. Now whether this was a genuine excuse or an excuse that he had been palmed off with I don't know. And a lot of them go out to work and make this the excuse, and Mrs H was saying that one of her mothers said she couldn't come because she had got to go to a Tupperware Party..And you know it's a case of what they think their priorities are. Obviously the Tupperware Party was more important.

Self: What year group is your in fact?

Mrs Q: First year, juniors.

Self: You'd think with the first year they would be interested: did they give excuses, other than that Tupperware one...? They'd all heard of it, I suppose?

Mrs Q: They all knew...the children...they took notes home and they obviously wanted their parents to come because it was the children who were making excuses on behalf of their parents quite often.

Self: When any parents didn't come did aunts or grandparents come?

Mrs Q: No. I think in the afternoon several people came with friends or neighbours but not in the evening to the interviews...they didn't bother.

Self: They had plenty of work on display did they?

Mrs Q: Well we had a very good display in the hall and the classroom looked attractive and so on...yes...We did some singing in the afternoon. Parents knew about it because the children had been home and said 'I am doing this this afternoon' and they wanted their parents to come, really I think: they would have liked them to I am sure.

Self: Yes, but do they individually do much of the kind of work they would want to show off?

Mrs Q: Well, no they don't. They're not very particularly proud of much of the work that they've done, on the whole. I don't think they're that bothered about the attitude...You cannot sort of bludgeon them by saying 'What on earth would your mother think of a piece of work like that?' Because they...(laughter)

Self: We've talked of this too. How strong are the family networks in this neighbourhood? And you say grandparents don't come to open evenings or open days. Do they meet up as families at all?

Mrs Q: Yes, quite a lot. You hear of children saying 'I'm going to so and so for the holidays' and this sort of thing. So I think they do have quite fairly strong family ties. Some of them but it varies...other children don't..

Self: I wonder if the children you see as particularly deprived don't have strong family networks. Is this one of the features I wonder? Will that vary?

Mrs Q: Well, that varies as well. In fact the ones that are very family-tied seem too tied down to the area and perhaps deserve to escape from it to give themselves a fresh start.

Self: Yes: and this is almost the sort of cycle of deprivation isn't it? You know you see it operating and they can't get out..

Mrs Q: Yes.

Self: They have no way of getting away. We'll come on to that a bit and then I think we'll talk again of what these deprived children do with themselves during the holidays...just muck around here?

Mrs Q: Yes, just muck around here...Some do (go away on holidays) - I've got one boy who has gone to North Wales this week. He seems to

come from a reasonable family and yet he's got an older brother who is always in trouble with the law.

Self: Really? He's a boy at secondary school, is he?

Mrs Q: No, he's left school; he's been in prison now..he's a lot older..twenty-one I think..

Self: He should be growing out of it now, shouldn't he?

Mrs Q: Should be. I don't think he will from the sound of him.

Self: He's been in jail though: perhaps he's learnt some more skills.

Now kids play in the street you say; what about play space? They've all got gardens I think Mrs J said...are there play spaces about here?

Mrs Q: Well there's a playground just at the end there. Then there was..did you see the local paper one week? It was in the holidays, I don't know what had happened or who had inspired it: some children had signed a petition to say..

Self: What from round here, gosh..?

Mrs Q: Yes. I don't know anything about it other than I saw it in the local paper - a petition demanding more play space. I think it was for the older children - no, for the younger ones, that's right. For younger children because the older ones were using their play space down there...in an aggressive way...and the younger ones didn't want to go in it. Then I mean they've got loads of area to play around here, I hardly think it was a very..

Self: Yes, plenty of open space isn't there. I don't know how accessible the countryside is though..

Mrs Q: But they've got all the space/<sup>out</sup>at the back there...

Self: Can they come into the school grounds?

Mrs Q: Yes. Well I suppose they're not meant to really, but they do. I mean it's not well enough guarded to stop them. Well, I don't really see why they shouldn't come in and play football on the football ground in the summer.

Self: No, it's a great pity there isn't a caretaker on site to keep an eye on things isn't it?

Mrs Q: Yes, it's just a case of..well things get damaged, which is a shame.

Self: Yes I heard that the Edward Gorton Secondary School does not have a caretaker either, and they have a lot of damage there..  
A pity..

Mrs Q: It is.

Self: Oh yes, is there much quarrelling in this district, (a) among adults, and (b) among the children?



Mrs Q: Ah, yes, the whole time (laughter)...It's a constant battle against children who are having petty arguments in the classroom. They're forever finding something...

Self: This is right across the board, is it?

Mrs Q: Yes, they all get involved.

Self: But do the adults quarrel a lot, do you think?

Mrs Q: Well from the number of divorces and separations and, er, reconciliations that you hear about, yes, the whole time..within the family, and with neighbours and so on. There was a quarrel about the fete, I think...That was slightly more sensible kind of thing...People organizing the fete. It's solved, but it happened.

Self: The fete? Where was the fete to be?

Mrs Q: It's happened, we've had the fete..

Self: The school fete?

Mrs Q: The school fete...which was organized by parents.

Self: Friends of the School is this? But they aren't necessarily parents, are they?

Mrs Q: No, one or two aren't parents, but most of them are.

Self: It does sound to be jumping about a bit, but how well informed are these children about the everyday facts of life?...Are they very knowledgeable in a general sense?

Mrs Q: No, in my class I've got three, perhaps, that I can rely upon to give a reasonable answer to a general knowledge question that you fling out at them...

TAPE RAN OUT AND HAD TO BE CHANGED.

T/R 5 Side (b)

Self: Are you a bit of a mathematician yourself?

Mrs Q: No (giggle) not really.

Self: Because some people in junior school are looking for ability to hang on to mathematical concepts, aren't they? Do you use any sort of equipment at all for maths? Cuisiniere Rods..

Mrs Q: Well, that sort of thing, and fixed bricks..and bricks for counting and sharing and, yes, quite a bit of equipment..weighing equipment and so on, as and when they need to use it..in conjunction with the work.

Self: And those who do this sort of reasoning..presumably it comes out, does it?

Mrs Q: Yes, it does in the maths especially, well, and in their language and in the way they answer questions generally..Some have got it and..

Self: Do you ever come across problems when you are talking with them?

Say there is a problem...kids of this age are very curious; is there, you know, 'we must solve this problem' sort of attitude? Have you come across that?

Mrs Q: No, not really.

Self: They are happy for you to tell them?

Mrs Q: They do ask questions but I think probably their ability to form a question is fairly limited and so they don't know what question to ask quite often, so they don't ask it.

Self: And this comes from the home, doesn't it?...in certain home backgrounds quite early on kids are being helped to formulate questions.

Mrs Q: It's a case that they just accept things rather than..make their own stimulation and question-asking and so on. I think they are just told to accept things at home or shut up.

Self: And that leads on to thoughts about social and occupational skills. I was talking to, I think it was Mrs H, about one of her special ones and she said that if he does anything I think he will be a road-sweeper, but it's very early in the first year to even look at them and where they're going, I suppose, but have you any thoughts at all on by looking at them, their families, perhaps..?

Mrs Q: Well, I can't imagine anybody..well, two boys in my class have got semi-professional parents..post office workers..and, so, I don't think I see much future for the others in any direction, apart from being manual workers.

in this sense

Self: If they want to be mobile/I suppose they might do this by joining the armed forces.

Mrs Q: Yes, we've got the Army section and some of them might see that as being their future.

Self: They don't do as the Irish do and sort of go away and dig holes in the ground or work on oil rigs or anything?

Mrs Q: Not really, one or two have done I believe but not that sort of thing..they've got jobs away but..

Self: It's not the cultural thing is it in the area?

Mrs Q: No.

Self: Do any get to the mines?

Mrs Q: We've got one mine worker that I know of, but they've moved in to the area..

Self: They don't seem to know how to get out..perhaps they don't want to get out and I think Mrs J was saying that they want to come back anyway..

Mrs Q: They do, they like their friends being round here..

Self: It is pleasantly situated, it is on the edge of the country; and yet they don't use the country much as middle-class people would use it perhaps.

They just like the area.

Mrs Q: It must be an atmosphere which they enjoy..I suppose it's quite friendly in a funny sort of a way.

Self: Well, this is true of the City anyway, isn't it?

Mrs Q: Yes.

Self: I was thinking this morning as I was coming along..Idon't think I have ever had a cross work with anyone in the City. You know, shops or garages or anything..and yet I seem always cross with people in stores in London.

Mrs Q: Oh yes, I feel that: I lived in Croydon as a child and I feel that it is more tranquil down here..somehow the pace is slower..

Self: Yes, the pace is slower..yet I don't know quite how you put your finger on it.

Social skills, they're not very well up in those I suppose?

Mrs Q: (hesitantly) No.

Self: The next one really follows on from that. Older brothers and sisters tend to remain in the neighbourhood, or at least come back..

How well do you know this district, I mean do you know people living near the school? Have you ever been to any local functions?

Mrs Q: Not really, no. I don't know it very well at all...I live in Turner Holme (a village outside the City)..

Self: Oh, yes, that's well in the country, isn't it?

Mrs Q: No, there aren't many things going on round here one would be drawn by anyway..I wouldn't want to live on top of the area anyway, I mean you don't particularly want to see the children outside school hours the whole time, and so on, you become too involved with them.

Self: I am hoping this holiday to get round with the E.W.O. and perhaps some social workers and get to know more about the people...

Is this a poor neighbourhood? Have you seen any evidence of poverty?

Mrs Q: Not monetarily, no, not really. I think they have got the money. They've probably got more than us (laughter), quite a lot of them.

Self: But disorganization is it, really?

Mrs Q: It's just that they spend their money on the wrong things; cigarettes and (blurred) and they just don't know how to use it.

Self: Yes, that's a pretty common one, isn't it?

Mrs Q: When I say they don't know how to use it; that's not fair really, is it? Because they use it how they want to. Perhaps it's us who don't know how to use our money.

Self: It's a cultural one really, isn't it?

Mrs Q: Yes, it is..

Self: Yet, the hard-liners come back and say 'Because you use your money in that way, you run out and you expect the community to cough up..'

Mrs Q: Yes..

Self: But that again contains a value judgment, doesn't it?

Mrs Q: Yes, it does.

Self: The last question on that sheet I had was do the local people appreciate the school?

Mrs Q: (laughing) I think they're just indifferent. Yes, it's just one of those things.

Self: Yes, the school is there and it is used. They expect kids to come to school and in some cases I suppose the school..

Mrs Q: Yes, they expect things ~~out~~ of it. They expect the..staff to sort out disputes between children and other children and they expect the school to get their children to read and they expect certain things of the school..and they're up in arms perhaps if these things don't happen, but they don't really expect it to fail perhaps ever. They're very keen to have positive things happen rather than negative things. But they wouldn't make use of the school or expect to do things in the school.

Self: Could anyone ever envisage a William Tyndale thing here.. you remember people got very uptight about what the school wasn't doing. I mean if you had a new trendy head come here who had lots of strange ideas, do you think the local people would get uptight about it?

Mrs Q: Yes, I think they would because they have very set ideas, they're inflexible, you could imagine them storming up here in arms somehow. Perhaps they wouldn't but there are one or two large mouthed types that, if they think anything is wrong, are very keen to put their rights forward and so on.

Self: That's an interesting one, isn't it, because all the evidence so far shows massive apathy? They almost want putting to the test, don't they?

Mrs Q: Well there are one or two that are so very keen to say 'This is wrong' and complain about teachers and so on, when they think...treated their children..I want my rights...My child has been treated badly.

Self: But do they come up and shout if the kid's not reading?

Mrs Q: No...I don't think so..They could come up with a guilty conscience perhaps and..say 'How can I help him?'..and 'Can he bring his reading books home?', 'I help them as much as I can' and so on. But it does not come to anything.

Self: They blame themselves rather than the school?

Mrs Q: No, they want to work in conjunction with the school, but it's just a momentary thing again.

Self: Would they blame the school, do you think, for bad behaviour in the home? Do they come up and say..be more firm with him because he's a damned nuisance at home? Do you come across that at all ever?

Mrs Q: No.

Self: I think the West Indian parents are very good at that in London, aren't they?

Mrs Q: Yes. They'll say 'you can always hit my child....if he's badly behaved' and so on; they'll give you the right to do that. I think they know what their children are like really, whether they're naughty or not..